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DIME

SEPTEMBER

MYSTERY

MAGAZINE



HONEYMOON IN HELL

MYSTERY-TERROR NOVEL BY
WYATT BLASSINGAME

— — —
HUGH B. CAVE
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H.M. APPEL

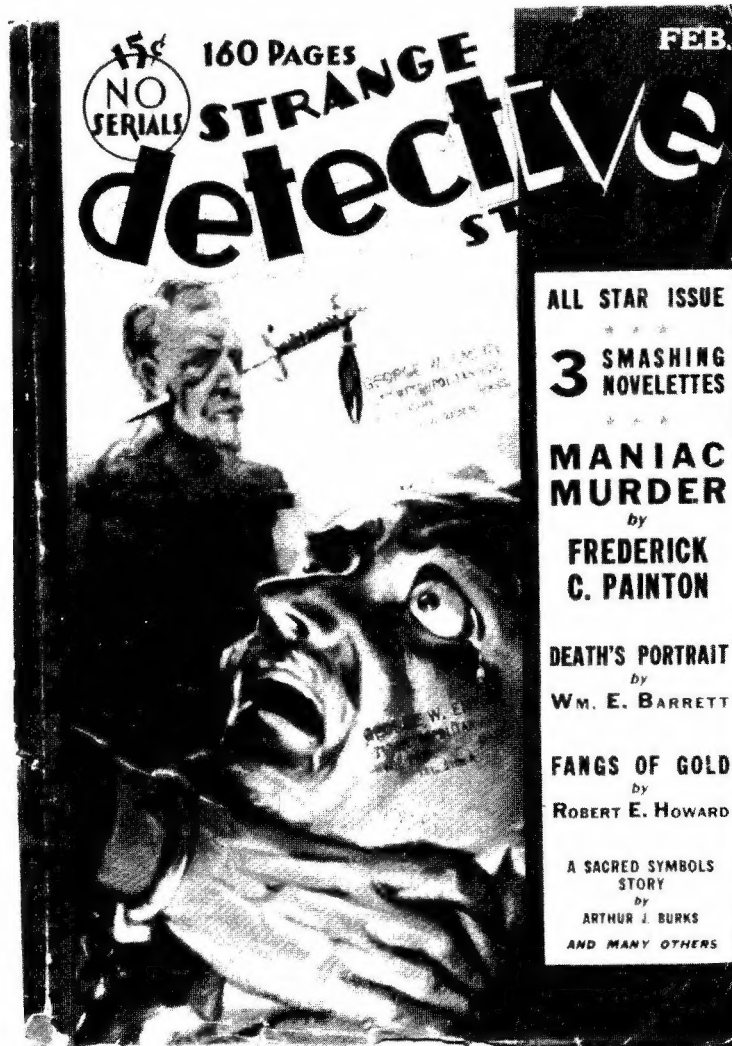
"THE WEIRDEST
STORIES EVER
TOLD"

THE
DIME
COLLECTOR

Issue #19

Coming Soon
Robert E. Howard's
Strange Detective Stories

For the first time in one volume, all three stories Robert E. Howard had published in



BLACK TALONS
FANGS OF GOLD
THE TOMB'S SECRET

With a foreward by Daniel Gobbett, noted Robert E. Howard Collector.

Only from The Pulp Collector Press

THE PULP COLLECTOR

VOL. 5 #3

THE PULP COLLECTOR PRESS

WINTER 1991

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FROM THE TOP

by John P. Gunnison

You will immediately notice that this issue has even more changes. New typeface that is easier on the eyes. Redesigned contents page and new headline font. Also we continue with more pulp reprints. The first, published last issue, featured one of the first Dan Turner stories...well to continue I've included the last Dan Turner to see print. Originally printed in *HOLLYWOOD DETECTIVE MAGAZINE* October 1950, "Death in the Spotlight" shows an incredible change in writing style for Robert Leslie Bellem.

Also this issue I'm running an article I wrote intitled: "Rare Pulps." I would like to ask all of you to please respond to this article with one of your own. I've written about some of the rarest pulps in my collection and can only imagine how many more of them are out there in your collection. Let us know!

Pulpcon is over and now that the dust has settled, I would like to give my humble thoughts some print.

I would like to congratulate Don Hutchison for his winning the Lamont Award at this years get together. Don's body of work has amazed me for years, since he never seems to tire and neither does his prose.

As for the con...discounting the poor rooms, lousy food and lack of a banquet...this con goes into my memory book as one of the best. Why? Well how many times do pulp collectors get to see Ryerson Johnson, John Fleming Gould, Edd Cartier, Julius Schwartz, Murphy Anderson and Harry Steeger all at the same time? Granted, Dayton Ohio has better facilities, but the ability to get these kind of guests is difficult outside of the New York City area. Also there for either the first time or in a long time were many pulp

collectors and dealers, many of whom cannot make the trek all the way to Dayton.

Even with the army barrack style of the dorm rooms, an improptu party began in my room the first night of the con. Attending the gathering was Robert Madle, Dan Gobbett, Andrew Zimmerli, Greg Brumfield and Rusty Hevelin. Stopping by but not staying was Rich Greene....afterall, there wasn't much room for anyone else who wanted to stay. Perhaps next year, with the con back in Dayton, The Pulp Collector Press might want to have a gathering room, for after hours meetings. If you would like to see this, please drop me a line and when you attend the con, stop by and join in on the conversations. No 900 numbers to call and no \$10.00 a minute phone bills. Just good clean pulp conversations and fun.

As far as pulps...I managed to sock away quite a few and was happy to see many old faces and was glad to meet a few new ones.

I guess it is best not to dwell on the food, but as Helen Deveny was so quick to point out...the King George Diner became the dining place of Pulpcon. Most meals included good food and hot topics like: copyright laws, rare pulps, Frank Robinson's newest book of Pulp Covers, (information on this book is forthcoming) and much more.

Once again we missed the personage of Nick Carr. We shall not excuse Nick next year...Nick you must attend, the con is smaller without you.

To wrap things up, I would like to thank all of whom who made it possible for this year's convention. I can only hope that it doesn't take another half a decade to make it either back to the East Coast, or possibly to the West Coast.

LETTERS

Dear John:

Thanks for the recent issue of TPC, fantastic job as always...Sampson, Carr and Page, another great line-up, great format, readability, don't change a thing! Well, maybe more pages, once a month publishing, more illustrations, color and ads with all the pulps I'm looking for. Like I said, one can dream...

Daniel Cobbett
Lanham, Maryland

Dan: Thanks for the rare letter. It has been noted between ourselves at just how amazing it is for friends not to go on record about things. We deal with each other on an almost weekly or monthly basis...trading pulps, trading stories and information...and you rarely write a letter to me or an article. First, I would like to thank you very much for the support that you have given me over the years in regards to this magazine. Your constant pats on the back helps more than I let on. Your tireless efforts in helping most everyone who writes you in regards to information just needs to be documented. So there it is! Dan and I have a running feud of a sorts going on though...since we both love pulps...we both try to outdo each other in collecting them. He needles me when I buy something, and I needle him when he does. Dan is one of the biggest buyers of pulps from Collectable Books...and Dan still gives me grief when I might keep a pulp than comes in. (A very rare occasion indeed...keeping a pulp out of the sale lists, that is.) In fact just the other month, Dan and I attended the New York City paperback con held by Gary Lovisi, Joe Crifo and John Gargiso. There, we elbowed each other to get to the few pulps that saw the light of day. All the way back, Dan and I parried and thrust our verbal barbs at who just bagged the better run of magazines.

Dear John:

I have somewhat of a mystery for you here which might appropriately be aired in your Pulp Information Department. Perhaps someone might have the answers. Briefly:

Jim Hanos has published 3 Captain America novelettes or short stories presumably written by noted science fiction writer Richard S. Shaver in his Greek fanzine, *MASKA*. He says these three stories were submitted by a friend of his who claims they were taken from an American pulp!

This was done quite a few years ago and Jim's friend is unable to recall what pulp that could have been. I find it very difficult to believe that Captain America should have ever appeared in the pulps, and even more incongruous that the stories should have been written by Richard S. Shaver. Yet, the illos which accompany the stories seem very definitely to be pulp-type illos. The depiction of Captain America, however, seems to be more like Captain America of the movie serial.

I am enclosing a copy of the first page of the stories with the illos accompanying them which Jim sent me. Also, a translation of the story title and dark paragraph at the beginning of each story. Perhaps you might like to reproduce all of this material for your readership in the hope that someone out there might recognize it and be able to identify the pulp it came from, if one such exists.

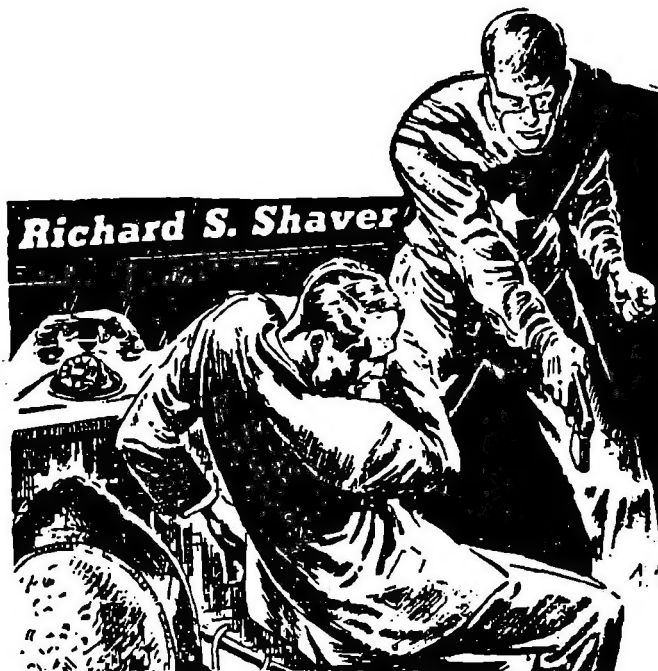
Best regards,
Chuck Juzek
Nanuet, NY

Chuck: I had deleted the Pulp Information Column last issue because of a lack of questions or answers. So therefore, please find your illos decorating the next several pages here in the letters column. I hope that someone will be able to determine what this is!

ΤΟ ΓΕΛΙΟ ΤΟΥ ΣΚΕΛΕΤΟΥ



THE LAUGH OF THE SKELETON -- 29 pages, from MASKA #136 "When the Chemist, Montague, discovers the most destructive substance in the world, he meets a strange fate. Captain America, the social guardian of America, then lives the most difficult and tragic moments of his life! The Committee of Chemical Research was in session. Five men were sitting around a big table, in a large and simply furnished room. The walls of the room were empty and only above the fireplace was there a painting hanging by an old painter, showing an alchemist bending over his small bottles.



STEELING DEATH -- 22 pages, from MASKA #115. "A perfect mechanical man who can run with a speed of 40 miles an hour and who is impervious to bullets falls into the hands of the enemies of society who use him against humanity. New York is besieged by crime and blood! The society is unable to resist this crushing attack and only the daring Captain America is able to confront the robot of death with his very life."

Chapter 1. -- The Man Who Was Not Human!



‘Ο Νεκρός όμιλεϊ...

THE DEAD SPEAK -- 11 pages, from MASKA #122 "The great social guardian of America, Captain America, ges in the whirlwind of an adventure full of mystery and death and risks his life to save his country from a grave danger. The man who was lying on the big divan with the silver sheets in the luxurious living room was dying. He was dying fast, with short, sharp, hissing breaths, while blood was rolling from a hole in his skull."

Dear John:

Thanks a million for publishing my want lists in the latest Pulp Collector.

That Black Mask with the Western cover and the Jackson Cole dustjacket also looked good. When I sent it to you I didn't expect it to be in print.

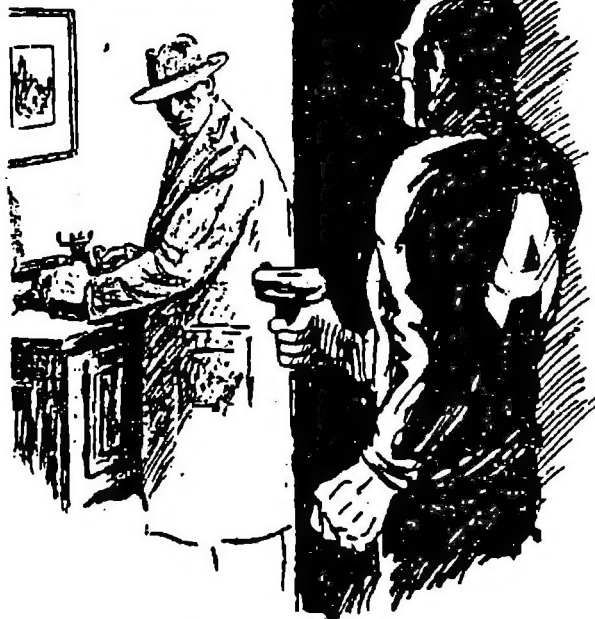
Sincerely,
Arthur W. Hackathorn
Denver, CO

Art: You'll never know when the Editor will strike again. He is known to publish most everything that falls across his desk!

Dear John:

Sheldon Jaffery's article on rare pulps reminded me of the old joke about the farmer who, having fallen off his turnip truck, went to see a movie. He sat through the same film over

— "Αφ' ουτ το πιστόλι δι-
πλα στο τηλέφωνο. Χάνει!
Σιέταζε ό Κόντσαν 'Αρίστα.



and over. When questioned about his odd behavior, he explained his reason as follows:

"There's one scene where these young girls are changing into bathing suits just as a long freight train goes by. Now sooner or later that darn train is going to be late!"

Well, this is my way of explaining how I happened to buy every single issue of *VICE SQUAD DETECTIVE*. I was utterly fascinated by the "one-shot" issue #1 which turned up in a back issue magazine store back in 1938. The publisher was some obscure company in Milwaukee, I believe.

As a then 14 year old boy, I was pleased when Columbia Publications picked up the title of *VICE SQUAD DETECTIVE*. You just couldn't discourage me. Issue after issue contained routine, mainstream, "clean as a hound's tooth" detective yarns. I remained convinced that sooner or later that worthy publication would once again contain yarns about hookers and red light districts. Well of course it never did happen, or to put it another way, that darn freight train never did miss its schedule!

But wouldn't you agree that issue #1 is indeed one of the rare pulps?

P.S. Apropos of my then rapidly increasing teenage fascination with "spicy" magazines, I also remember receiving a very nice personal reply from the publisher of *PARIS NIGHTS* Magazine, who, responding to my complaint that no recent issues of his publication had arrived at my favorite newsstand, candidly admitted that his publishing company was the victim of "police interference." (Wish I'd saved his reply.)

Irving L. Jacobs
National City, CA

Irving: Thanks for the letter and your memories of what I also call one of the rarest pulps...*VICE SQUAD DETECTIVE*. Thanks again.

Dear Mr. Gunnison:

I am in the process of preparing the second edition of our *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FRONTIER*

AND WESTERN FICTION (McGraw-Hill, 1983) which will be published in 1994 by the University of Nebraska Press. I have been asked by the Press to expand the article on pulp Western fiction to include a brief history of every pulp Western magazine. My needs are, therefore, very specific. I need some source through which I can get in touch with pulp dealers and with collectors of Western pulps who might supply me with some information. I wish to know if a subscription to your magazine would help me in this specific endeavor?

Best Wishes,
Jon Tuska
Portland, OR

Jon: I would love to have you subscribe, but I also think that opening this letter to our readers would get you more information than you dreamed possible. Therefore if anyone can help Mr. Tuska, please write him at the following address:

Jon Tuska
3318 S.E. Madison Street
Portland, OR 97214

Dear John:

I'm enclosing four bucks for a copy of *VICE SQUAD DETECTIVE* #3. While at it, I may as well get the jump on my subscription renewal to *The Pulp Collector*; make that a check for 24 bucks.

I truly sympathize with you, John, regarding those problems which have been plaguing you recently. I don't write to you often, and when I do I don't say much, but let me say how much I (and, I'm sure, many others) appreciate what you are doing for the pulp community. I hope both of us are around for many more years to enjoy *The Pulp Collector* and associated projects.

Lester Mayer
Wheaton, MD

Lester: Thanks for the kind words of encouragement. Readers and authors alike make this

publication fun. I just wish that it wouldn't be such a financial drain sometimes.

Dear John:

P.C. #18 was up to your usual high quality standards. I particularly enjoyed "Dem Bones...Dem Bones" with its profusion of illustrative covers. I also enjoyed the Dan Turner story; I, for one, would not object to his regular appearance in P.C.. What with Eternity Comics' reprints and the recent movie, Dan Turner seems to be well resurrected. My favorite Dan Turner item is S.J. Perelman's "Somewhere a Roscoe...", an affectionate tribute to the whole genre.

Mel Madel
Sturgeon Bay, WI

Mel: You will be happy to find another Dan Turner story reprinted here, and possibly the only time this story has seen print since it first appeared in the digest version (the only issue published in this format...perhaps yet another rare pulp find???) of *HOLLYWOOD DETECTIVE MAGAZINE*. This also must be the last appearance of Dan as the magazine folded without publishing another issue.

Dear John:

TPC #17 was another excellent issue—I especially enjoyed Robert Sampson's Terence X. O'Leary piece. I'm glad that you were able to run the Rogers self-portrait.

I am continuing to compile information on Canadian artists who contributed to the pulps

and am wondering if anyone can identify issues that feature covers and/or interior illustrations by the Canadian comic artist Edmond Good. So far, I have located just one pulp cover by Good — the May 1942 issue of *TEXAS RANGERS*; however, I suspect that he did more work in the field.

I would suggest that you consider adding the Canadian pulp *EERIE TALES* (one issue—July 1941) to the list of the fifty rarest pulps. It's my impression that it's a very uncommon title. Incidentally, in addition to encouraging readers to vote on the rarest titles, you might also explore the possibility of compiling a census of rare pulps — for instance, how many readers actually own copies of *EXCITEMENT*? It seems to me that such data would provide a useful measure of rarity. What do you think?

Cheers,
John Bell
Ottawa, Ontario Canada

John: As you might have guessed with the last issue and now this issue, we have changed the rarest pulps into one of a series of articles by anyone who would like to contribute. Anyone who would be interested in sending in a list of however many titles they own and would like to be thought of as rare, please do so. Canadian issues of magazines or the truly "rare" Canadian only titles are more than welcome. In fact many here, south of the border, don't know the titles, let alone just how rare they are!

Advertise in The Pulp Collector

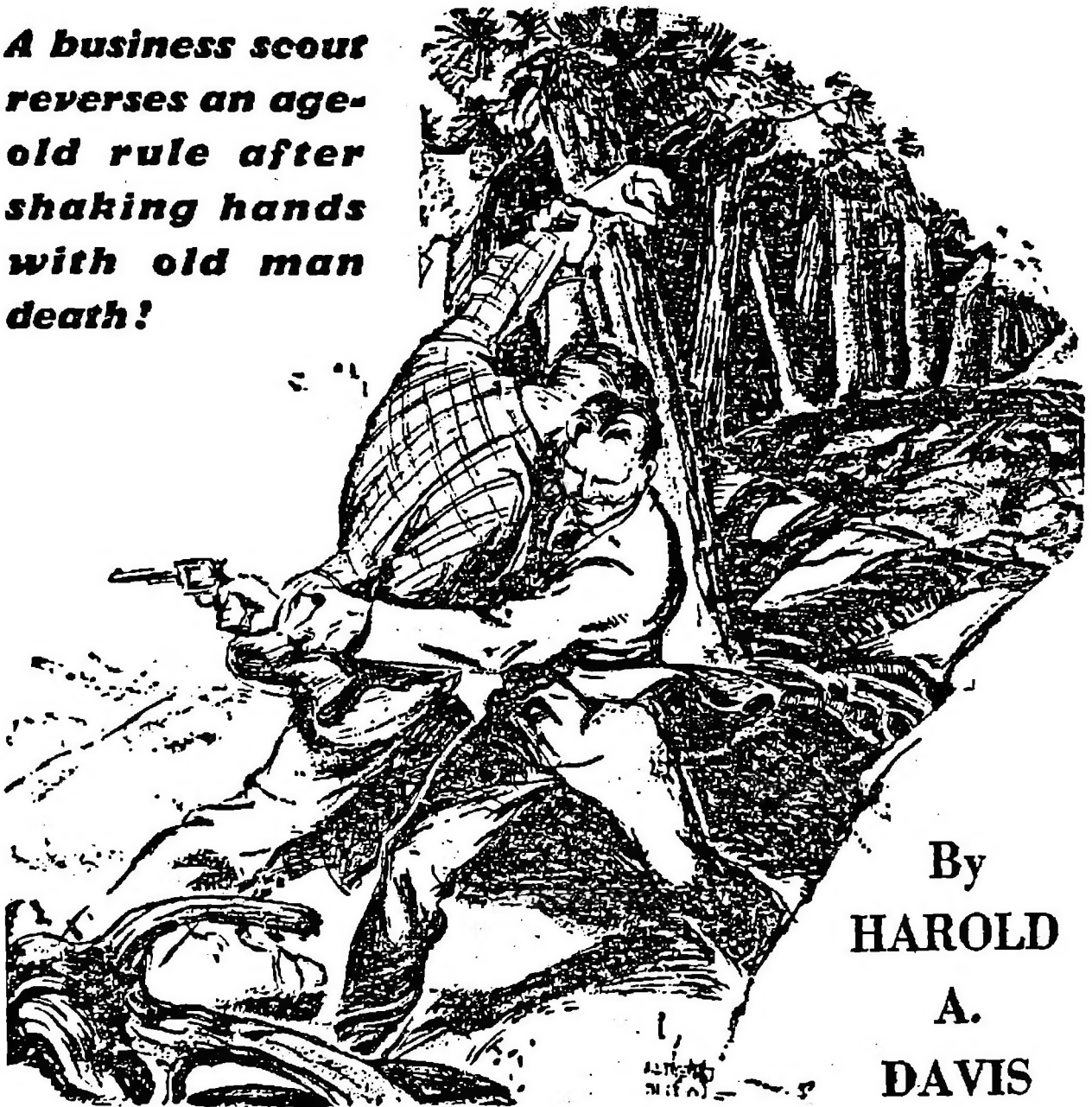
Reach nothing but pulp collectors and fans by advertising in The Pulp Collector. It's easy all you have to do is jot down what you want your ad to say, and we will typeset the ad for you at no extra charge. Make your money orders or checks payable to John P. Gunnison.

Or if you prefer, send us your camera ready art. Prices are inexpensive:

FULL PAGE - \$12.00

HALF PAGE - \$7.00

***A business scout
reverses an age-
old rule after
shaking hands
with old man
death!***



By
**HAROLD
A.
DAVIS**

Business With Pleasure

DUKE GRANT

by Rich Harvey

In all of Doc Savage lore, Lester Dent has become a modern folk-hero in his own right, having chronicled the adventures of the great bronze one and his scrappy pals. However, one man remains rather static to pulp fans, despite having been credited as a very important part of the bronze one's legend.

Harold A. Davis, as pulp historian Will Murray pointed out (in *Duende* #2), penned some of the best Doc Savage adventures from 1936 to 1939, and may even have been the man who convinced Lester Dent to enter the pulp field! One of his contributions to the Doc Savage series, however, goes largely ignored even to this day. With the need for back-up material to

round out every issue, Davis provided an original series character who appeared around the same time his first Doc Savage story went to press.

The character was Duke Grant, a business scout who engaged in all manner of crimefighting in his search for new business prospects. He appeared in a total of twelve stories, the first being "The Golden Key," in the August 1936 issue of *DOC SAVAGE MAGAZINE*. This pilot episode formed the mold into which the remaining eleven stories would be poured.

When we first meet Duke Grant, he is said to represent an ambiguous group of New York investors. He gallivants around various parts of the globe looking for new business opportunities and searches out supplies to rejuvenate the old.

Duke Grant travels far and wide for his business prospects—he is at an unspecified town near the Mexican border in "The Decoy;" Sidney, Australia is the setting for "Grease and Beauty;" and the Rocky Mountains provide the backdrop for "Business With Pleasure."

All descriptions of Duke are almost identical, right down to the last word. It is like the stock footage a television series uses each week, except that we are dealing with prose. To wit, Duke Grant's physical appearance as first described in "The Golden Key," and as it would be re-told in every other entry to the series:

"Mexican towns are accustomed to weird-appearing sights. But none had seen a stranger figure than this. Scarcely more than five feet in height, Duke Grant's shoulders were more than two feet wide. This would not have been so exceptional—except that from the shoulders down he

By
HAROLD
A. DAVIS



A business scout uses

THE GOLDEN KEY

*to unlock the door to treasure,
mystery—and death!*

seemed to shrink, as if he were a wedge. His hips were lean; his feet were small."

"...he appeared to be a human triangle, with his feet the apex."

"...his sandy hair was pressed flat on the top of his head." ("The Golden Key," 08/36)

He also wears an old beaver hat, long since passe by 1936.

He is known to thousands of people with prospects, who summon him to help them protect their discoveries. Bad move, as most of Duke Grant's clients generally don't live to meet him.

By the time Duke arrives, the client has

Duke is habitually chewing gum, "a sure sign he anticipated trouble."

usually gone way of the Happy Hunting grounds, leaving behind a strange object that has no apparent value. Criminals are always after the secret, or they have it and want to keep its existence quiet. And it's up to Duke to solve the murder and discover the secret of this issue's new prospect.

Duke is habitually chewing gum, "a sure sign he anticipated trouble," to help him concentrate on the solution to a particular difficult case. Another of Duke's habits is distorting old proverbs whenever it's time for a snappy comeback.

"Duke Grant looked into the muzzle of the .45 without change of expression. His long jaw continued its unhurried, rhythmic, mastication of a stick of chewing gum."

With all these killers and crooked businessmen running around, most business scouts would hang up their beaver hats and settle down to a nice desk job. Except for Duke Grant,

and not despite the danger, but rather because of it!

"'I'm a businessman,' he corrected, 'a business scout, in fact. Business always comes first. But--' he grinned widely-- 'business before pleasure may have been written for some guys, but fighting is play; and in this game, I've always found it's business with pleasure. That's why I like it.'" ("Business With Pleasure, 02/37")

"...A business scout, particularly one who tramps into hidden corners of the earth in search of new discoveries, new clues to riches, must always be ready to act." ("The Golden Key," 08/36)

Duke certainly has enough playtime ahead of him in his twelve chronicled adventures. Numerous times, he is beaten, ambushed, chased, and engages in countless fistfights and shootouts. Twice in the series, his skull gets creased by a bullet!

Whew! Capitalism can hurt!

Of course, it doesn't take a crate of chewing gum to drop on him for Duke Grant to prepare himself for the worst. He's always sensing danger at the beginning of almost every scene (small wonder!), and equips himself appropriately.

His arsenal consisted only of a snub-nosed automatic and his beaver-hat, which is padded and lined to absorb blows to the head, leaving Duke to fend for himself using his physical prowess and shrew cunning to see him through another adventure.

Duke is good with his fists, a regular brawler in the grand tradition. A number of adversaries fell before him, and he could certainly have taught Renny Renwick a thing or two.

"...[Duke's] hard knuckles smacked squarely into the face of his assailant. That face became a crimson, shapeless mass." ("The Golden Key")

Duke's acrobatic background surfaces in later stories--he flips and jumps his way out of hairy situations kung-fu style. Bruce Lee would have applauded.

People are violently killed off in the Grant stories, usually innocent people who summon the business scout. Of course, Duke wasn't adverse to bumping off a few hoods on the path to finishing a business deal, and he racked up an admirable body-count by the time his final adventure--"An Honest Find"--was published.

Due to the nature of the stories, or perhaps because of Davis' style for this series, very little was ever disclosed about Duke's background. A friend of Duke's is killed in "Grease and Beauty"; and an old enemy returns in "Business With Pleasure" for a showdown. Beyond that, he remained a rather static character.

The best example of lack of continuity is at the end of "The Golden Key," where Duke forms a partnership with Jose Serando of the Mexican Secret Service. Their partnership promises an interesting wrinkle to future stories, but Serando is never heard from again, nor mentioned.

Through twelve adventures, Duke Grant dodged his way past numerous cliffhangers and bullets, not to mention the persistent sound effects that followed him. Whenever a shootout began, there inevitably followed a resounding *Ping! Ping!* or a clipped *Blam!* that accompanied each gunshot. This annoying trait helped Will Murray identify Harold Davis as one of the Lester Dent ghosts (in Duende #2). Davis' sound effects spilled into those lead novels, and every time Doc or one of the Fabulous Five used their supermachine pistols, a hearty *B-r-r-r* spat forth.

At this point, the Duke Grant series abruptly ended. Having penned a total of eleven Doc Savage novels--many of which stand out as the highlights of the series--Harold A. Davis moved onward, eventually working for *Newsday* and other publications outside the pulp field.

Duke Grant was relegated to the fading memories of Doc Savage readers, at a time with back issues was difficult. There was no special mention to mark his passing, although he provided good, solid entertainment with his adventures over the course of three years.

Despite Davis' few shortcomings, and the formula through which each story was funneled, the twelve Duke Grant stories remain entertaining tales of action and adventure. Certainly, whereas one had to be "a man among men" to justify being in Doc Savage's stomping grounds, Duke Grant measured up admirably.

With the un-heralded end to the series, one can only wonder as to the whereabouts of the business scout. Duke may have gone on the more conventional business enterprises, taking advantage of one of his discoveries and finally settling down to the Good Life.

Or, perhaps somewhere out there it is still 1936, and Duke Grant is still searching out new prospects, still murdering every cliché proverb. Perhaps he is still running from armies of hoodlums, intent on killing him to keep a secret.

And loving every minute of it.

Duke Grant
by Harold A. Davis
in *Doc Savage Magazine* (Street & Smith)

- 01) The Golden Key - The Midas Man - 08/36
- 02) The Flying Freightler - Land of Long Juju - 01/37
- 03) Business with Pleasure - The Derrick Devil - 02/37



By HAROLD A. DAVIS

RED EGGS

Pretty to look at, but their color spoke ominously of what was to come!

- 04) Red Eggs - The Terror in the Navy - 04/37
- 05) The Decoy - He Could Stop the World - 07/37
- 06) Grease--and Beauty - Repel - 10/37
- 07) The Spoils of War - The Mountain Monster - 02/38
- 08) Treasure Hoarde - The Pirate's Ghost - 04/38
- 09) Snake Bite - The Motion Menace - 05/38
- 10) The Devil's Club - Mad Mesa - 01/39
- 11) If You Must Fight - The Crimson Serpent - 08/39
- 12) An Honest Find - Poison Island - 09/39

*For more information of Harold A. Davis, or the other authors of the Doc Savage stories, see "The Secret Kenneth Robesons" by Will Murray, Duende #2, 1977

*Thanks to Albert Tonik for his assist in researching the Duke Grant series--I promised I wouldn't damage your Doc Savage issues!



By HAROLD A. DAVIS

***She didn't have wings, but
she flew! And Duke Grant
wanted to know why!***

The Flying Freighter

FIFTY MORE RARE PULPS

by Daniel Gobbett

I find Larry Latham's "Fifty Rarest Pulps" and John Gunnison's "ballot" of the fifty rarest titles to be most interesting, especially after recent talks on the subject and with Pulpcon just this past July. My own thoughts on the subject and my ballot for the top fifty would be as follows:

1) *THE THRILL BOOK*: would start my list with an obvious choice, have only seen a handful of issues over the years, a complete run of all 16 issues would be any SF/Fantasy pulp collector's dream. I have only been able to obtain, one issue in all my years of pulp collecting. Rare and expensive, the two great stumbling blocks for any collector, but, one must always have dreams.....

2) *ASTOUNDING STORIES*: January, 1930 #1. Historically important, I have only seen one or two over the years. Am with Latham on this one, not worth \$250., and I love the old SF pulps. I need this one myself, just not willing to pay the piper.

3) *BUCK JONES WESTERN*: November, 1936. #1. Have never seen one, though I myself could care. Defer to western collectors who tell me it is rare.

4) *BLUE STEEL MAGAZINE*: Again, have seen one or two over the years, a very rare title I understand. I would like to have an example for my collection.

5) *FLASH GORDON*: December, 1936. Uncommon. I have obtained a fair to good copy just this year. I have seen about four over the last 25 years only one in fine. Would have been nice if it had Raymond's art as stands, an oddity. I think that one can make a case for almost any other one-shot pulp magazine title in this or any other slot on a list of rare titles, unless the print run was very large.

6) *LONE RANGER*: April, 1937. #1. Again, deferring to my western pulp collecting fans. I

understand it to be very rare, though I have seen copies. I'm even in the market for this one, being a Culture/Trojan publications collector. Just waiting for the right condition and price.

7) *MOVIE ACTION*: Uncommon, can't say I call it "Rare", I have two different issues myself and have seen a few more over the years. I like the June, 1936 issue the best, Boris Karloff in "The Walking Dead!" Great stuff! Along with a "Three Stooges" scenario and a "Buck Jones" western script for "Silver Spurs." This is a Street & Smith publication edited by the great John Nanovic himself! What more can you want in a pulp? Seriously, while this is a nice and collectable item, I might be tempted to replace it with say, *MOVIE DETECTIVE* which I have never seen, except a picture of, so it must exist.

8) *SCARLET ADVENTURESS / MODERN ADVENTURESS*: Or I should add, "Scarlet" anything. Adventureess, Confessions, Gang Smashers, or Gang Stories. These all are titles and uncommon in condition. These are indeed pulps, containing only fiction and printed on pulp paper, though over sized or "Bedsheet," to discount them would discount early "Amazings," "Unknown" and "Weird Tales" as well as other titles. I do have a number of these in my own collection, more out of luck than anything else, picking up most in a batch deal. Interesting for some of the covers and the story lines with women as heroines and adventureess.

9) *POPULAR ENGINEERING*: April, 1930. Again the One-shot or short-lived highly specialized series at work here. Have only seen a picture of this one.

10) *PRISON STORIES*: May, 1931. Hersey pulps! Larry hit the nail on the head with these. Almost any title in this line is hard to come by. Mainly I guess because of the poor paper they were printed on, or that no one cared to save them and most went to paper drives of the

dumps. This title as good as any, though *FIRE FIGHTERS* would fit just as well.

11) *THE SECRET SIX*: January, 1935. As hero pulps go, a hard series to complete with a four issue run. I have only the second issue in my collection. Number 1 is by far the easiest, as Larry noted. A very readable one too, would like to see the other issues reprinted.

12) *THE SHADOW*: April, 1931. #1. A pulp history milestone. Rare too!

13) *SUBMARINE STORIES*: John Locke's pulp index says six issues published, I have only seen one myself, another short-lived, specialized pulp.

14) *TALES OF MAGIC AND MYSTERY*: Short-lived and rare. Am looking for the Lovecraft issue myself. But, I have seen one or two in John Gunnison's collection that might make me want to place this title on my want list. I have none at present. Unusual in design if not content.

15) *TAILSPIN TOMMY*: October, 1936. Rare, yes. As is the Dan Dunn from the same publisher. Due more to poor paper and production than anything else I guess. I have a fairly nice copy of "TT", as Larry Latham noted, it's almost unreadable. More in demand as a comic strip tie-in than anything else I would guess.

16) *UNDERWORLD ROMANCES*: November, 1931. Another short-lived series, John Locke index lists only three issues. I have only seen one at a show a few years back, poor condition and over-priced, still these are on my want list, I enjoy such things, but may be for sometime to come.

17) *WEIRD TALES*: Yes, yes yes to quote Larry. Early issues are a pain to collect, I know I collect them! Pricy too. 1923-27 anyway, "Bedsheet" issues are the worst, as hard to come by as 1940 through 1954 issues of WT are easy. But, one of the all-time great pulps.

18 & 19) *THE MYSTERIOUS WU FANG & DR. YEN SIN*: Great titles, fun pulps and as Larry noted getting very hard to come by, may try to complete my sets. Rare in condition lets say. Demand may be the cause here, can't say. Have seen a number of copies over the years.

20) *ZEPPELIN STORIES*: Rare, yes! \$300, no! I would be the first to admit I would like to have an example of this in my collection, as I do enjoy

the occasional aviation pulp, but this title has always seemed over-priced to me. Ramer titles are uncommon, but I have seen a number of these over the years, all either over-priced or in poor condition, sometimes both, is the demand for these really that big? Just asking.

Here's where I part with the original listing of titles, oh, I guess you could list number 21 as any issue of *ORIENTAL STORIES* or *MAGIC CARPET*, I collect them myself, in condition most are very uncommon, if not rare. But I would not put one issue above another. In some cases, the last issues are harder by far than the first, true of a number of pulps, as print-runs were cut back.

For numbers 22 through 50, I would draw on The Pulp Collector listing in "ballot" and on John Locke's index as well as what I have found to be uncommon over my years of collecting and reading pulp fiction. So I can add mostly without comment the following:

22) *DANGER TRAIL*

23) *EXCITEMENT*

24) *EXPLORERS* - good "adventure"-type published by Dell, very rare. Have only seen one issue over the years.

25) *FIRE FIGHTERS*

26) *GUN MOLLS MAGAZINE*

27) *HIGH SPOT MAGAZINE* - another rare adventure pulp. Have one issue.

28) *HOODED DETECTIVE*

29) *HOPALONG CASSIDY WESTERN MAGAZINE* - oddly rare 50's pulp.

30) *JUNGLE STORIES* (Clayton)

31) *NAVY STORIES*

32) *NICKEL DETECTIVE* or *NICKEL WESTERN*

33) *POCKET DETECTIVE MAGAZINE* - One of the first digest sized pulps, have one issue.

34) *RACKET STORIES*

35) *RACKETEER AND GANGLAND STORIES*

36) *RED-BLOODED STORIES* - Another fine adventure pulp title, rare.

37) *"SAUCY"* Anything. Detective, Movie Tales, Romantic Adventures. Now I do collect these, some of the stories are good, the Saunders covers excellent. *SAUCY DETECTIVE* though is very poor. Bad stories and art, de-

erves to be rare. A bottom-of-the-barrel rip-off of the "Spicy" line, if you can imagine one.

38) *SNAPPY DETECTIVE* and *SNAPPY MYSTERY* - both rare, both over-sized. I have a copy of the "Detective", another "Spicy" type of publication.

39) *SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE* - Uncommon Clayton title, if not rare.

40) *SURE-FIRE SCREEN STORIES* - Have this, like "Movie Action" a fun film related title. Have not seen *SURE-FIRE DETECTIVE* — one shot?

41) *THRILLS OF THE JUNGLE* - One shot jungle title.

42) *VICE SQUAD DETECTIVE* - thanks for reprinting this John! A rare one.

43) *WALL STREET STORIES* - have heard of only one copy of this! Now that's rare.

44) *ZOOM* - another rare aviation title.

45) *TROPICAL ADVENTURES*

46) *STREET & SMITH SAMPLER* - nicely packaged one shot pulp.

47) *SPEAKEASY STORIES*

48) *MURDER STORIES*

49) *RED STAR MYSTERY* and *RED STAR ADVENTURE*

50) *CLEVER STORIES* - a rebound copy of the November, 1922 *BLACK MASK* along with a early twenty's issue of *SNAPPY STORIES* popped off with a new cover. Which is a pulp I have found that no one else seems to have, making it super rare and worth \$1,000....just kidding, I do have this item, and it is kind of neat having something that no one else seems to have. I just threw it in to as #50 to show that a case could be any number of other pulps. One

of the great things about the field is that no collection, one with two hundred or two thousand pulps is without interesting items. The above are my opinion, fifty pulp collectors will get you fifty different listings, thought I sure a fair number would be the same on most (but, not all) lists. I'm sure a western pulp fan's list would make a case for say, Clayton titles that I have left off, and who am I to say he is not right? If you are missing say, only the fifth issue of *BLACK MASK* to complete your set, then that is the rarest pulp.

The fact is that no one really knows for sure, only through the passage of information from one collector to another, one's reading of the excellent fanzines this field has to offer, one's experiences with dealers, both good and bad, through the mails or at conventions such as PulpCon, does one learn. I have been lucky to learn and read so many good magazines over the years that I now feel a need to share, for whatever it's worth any information asked of me. I can only hope others will do the same.

Anyway, these are what I feel are at least 50 of the rarest pulp titles in my experiences, some I own, many more I do not and am still in the market for (dealers, please note!) also I just want to add to any newcomers to the field, that this is not a listing the most expensive pulps, my guess is that it be a far different list indeed, as a good number of these pulps listed above are not in any great demand by many collectors. If you are looking for investments, better buy Golden Age comics, you are in the wrong field.

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Silk was clambering over the roof when Bronco thrust out an arm through the window, bringing up his gun

WHO REMEMBERS THE BLACK BAT?

by Will Murray

When Bob Kane and Bill Finger labored over the creation of the Batman one weekend early in 1939, they little dreamed that a prolific pulp writer was simultaneously hard at work on a new series of novels featuring a character who would be a virtual mirror image of their own. And had they known, they might have been forced to junk their seminal creation and literally go back to the drawing board for an entirely different concept.

In an industry that has seen many uncanny creative coincidences, the twin sagas of the Batman and the Black Bat must be the most incredible.

One of the most popular pulp hero series of the 1940s, the Black Bat is virtually forgotten by all but ardent pulp collectors--and his creator. One of the most prolific writers of pulp heroes in the tradition of The Shadow, Norman A. Daniels has been erroneously credited with ghost writing Doc Savage, a series he says he had nothing to do with. But as a freelancer for Leo Margulies' Better Publications, Daniels often penned the exploits of their most famous character, the Phantom Detective, and created others like the Masked Detective and the Crimson Mask, all under pen names.

"There was hardly any difference between them," says the 84 year old Daniels, now retired and living in California. "The Phantom was a little bit different. It wasn't quite as fantastic."

In 1938, pulp heroes were still the rage despite growing competition from comic books and publishers busily competed to create new ones.

"Leo asked me to think of something in competition with the Shadow," Daniels recalls. "And I came up with this character. I called him

the Tiger because in the initial episode, the hero had been doused with acid and his face was lined something like a tiger."

Daniel's new character was District Attorney Tony Quinn-- this was before the famous actor of the same name--who, after losing his sight and suffering tiger-stripe scars around his eyes, goes into seclusion. A mysterious woman offers him an opportunity to regain his sight and get back at the criminals who blinded him. Quinn agrees to an experimental eye transplant. When he emerges from the operation, Quinn discovers that his new eyes give me catlike night vision. Donning black clothing and a black hood to hide those telltale scars, he straps a pair of automatics on his hips and goes after his tormentors.

Leo Margulies liked Daniel's first novel, but he demanded one minor but very fateful revision.

"He wanted to change the Tiger to the Black Bat because he wanted it to go into *BLACK BOOK DETECTIVE MAGAZINE*," Daniels says.

Margulies might have been thinking of the Bat, a bat-cloaked villain the Phantom Detective fought only months beforehand. But his inspiration was probably a failed hero called The Bat which Margulies had published in *POPULAR DETECTIVE* back in 1934. That Bat was private detective Dawson Clade who, framed for a murder and "executed" in an inoperable electric chair, retreats to a secluded wooded cabin to plan how to strike back at crime now that he's officially dead. When the shadow of a trapped bat appears on the wall, Clade has an inspiration identical to the one that would seize Bruce Wayne five years later, prompting Clade to cry,

"That's it! I'll call myself The Bat." (Wayne's exclamation was, "A bat! That's it! It's an omen...I shall become a *bat* !")

Dressed in a business suit, The Bat wore a sacklike black hood with a white bat symbol on his forehead. He carried a gas gun and left bat stickers at the scenes of his depredations. His career spanned only four novelettes, each one bylined C.K.M. Scanlon. It's believed that this house pseudonym hid no less than Johnston McCulley, Zorro's famous creator.

Whatever triggered Margulies' suggestion, Daniel's novel was swiftly retitled "Brand of the Black Bat" and the Tiger was changed to the Black Bat. His "catlike" eyes became his "bat-like" eyes. And the scene where Quinn explains how he intends to get back at Oliver Snate, the criminal mastermind who ruined his face, was rewritten.

"I want people to think I'm helpless and that I haven't enough interest in life to even have my features mended," Quinn tells his valet, "Silk" Kirby. "We'll operate anonymously. No one must know who we are. I'll have to wear a mask, or course--a complete hood, I suppose, if my features are as bad as that doctor said they were."

"Yes sire," Silk nodded, "it will have to be a hood. I'll make one, sir, of silk. Black silk, that can't be seen in the night. You can dress in black also and be nothing more than a dim shadow in the darkness."

"But there must be some means of identification," Quinn pursed his lips. "Something by which men can recognize me. An insignia--a name, Silk--I have it! I've been blind--as blind as a bat. I am still so far anyone knows. I shall prowl during the night. Bats are blind and fly by night also. I'll be the bat, Silk. *The Black Bat* !"

Today, Daniels no longer remembers if he made those revisions or if they were undertaken by some anonymous copy editor. But of one fact, he *is* certain.

"We were the first," he chuckles.

Technically, Daniels is correct. His personal payment records indicate that he was paid for "Brand of the Black Bat" on December 6, 1938--at least two months before Bob Kane created Batman in January, 1939. However, Batman was the first character in print, debuting in *DETECTIVE COMICS* #27 cover-dated, May

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1939. The Black Bat premiered in the July, 1939, *BLACK BOOK DETECTIVE*.

In keeping with Better's house style, only the Black Bat's hooded face graced *BLACK BOOK DETECTIVE* covers. But dressed in his all-black regalia of ribbed cloak and hood and clothes, he strongly resembled Batman. He lacked on a bat emblem on his chest and ears on his hood. Even so, in a dark alley, they could have passed for cousins.

This amazing resemblance hardly went unnoticed in the editorial offices of Better Publications and DC Comics. As Batman's co-creator Bill Finger told Jim Steranko in his "History of Comics," "There was a lawsuit almost pending. Apparently this character had already been written and on the drawing board. Whit Ellsworth used to be a pulp writer for Better Publications. So through Ellsworth's intervention a lawsuit was averted. They were ready to sue us and we were ready to sue them. It was just one of those wild coincidences."

Whitney Ellsworth was the first official *BATMAN* editor. He later hired one of the early Black Bat editors, Mort Weisinger, to replace him. One of the first Batman writers Weisinger hired was Charles Green, who had written

Phantom Detective novels for him, including the one featuring the villainous Bat. In yet another twist, Weisinger late brought Jack Schiff over from Better to replace him on *BATMAN* when Weisinger was drafted. Schiff—who had edited the original Bat series in *POPULAR DETECTIVE*—as the man who gave Weisinger his first editorial job at Better, back in 1933. None of these musical-chair switches had anything to do with the creation of either Batman or the Black Bat, however.

For his part, Daniels was unaware of the nearly averted legal collision. "I knew nothing about that," he states. "That was all done in the office. They never told me anything about it. They never asked my advice."

Both firms agreed to ignore the problem. Batman went on to great popularity. The Black Bat's success, while more modest, was nevertheless impressive by pulp magazine standards. he dominated *BLACK BOOK DETECTIVE* in stories such as "The Black Bat's Crusade," "The Faceless Satan," "The White Witch," "Without Blood They Die" and 62 other novels. Daniel's wrote all but seven of them.

The early Black Bat novels were in the classic pulp tradition. Quinn fought vicious master criminals and Nazi spies with his blazing automatics. Superstitious criminals thought him unkillable, and believed he could fly. They cowered at the sight of his batlike outline—or at the bat stickers he left on the foreheads of criminals he destroyed. But Quinn's true nemesis was Police Lieutenant McGrath, who suspected Quinn's secret and kept trying to prove he could still see. No loner, Quinn was aided by the trio of Silk Norton, ex-boxer Butch Leary and Carol Baldwin. She was the mysterious woman who gave Quinn back his sight. The transplanted eyes had belonged to her murdered police officer father, another victim of Oliver Snate.

As the years went on, and Batman's villains grew increasingly more bizarre, the Black Bat's foes became more realistic. Invisible crooks and voodoo masters like Dr. Zuro gave way to more plausible organized criminals. A turning point in the series was "Markets of Treason," where McGrath presents Quinn with a seeing-eye dog

named Gwendolyn. Quinn learns the hard way that Gwendolyn is trained to attack anyone wearing a batlike cape. And so Quinn was forced to abandon his signature cloak.

When *BLACK BOOK DETECTIVE* was canceled in 1953, the Black Bat disappeared from American news stands and with his wife, Dorothy, Daniels turned to writing paperback books and never looked back. He was all but oblivious to Batman's continued success.

"I've never seen one," he says of *BATMAN* comic books. "I never had anything to do with them, and I never bothered with them."

Neither does Daniel's suffer any pangs of regret that it wasn't his character that went on to become a household word. And he makes surprisingly little of the marked similarities between the Black Bat and Batman.

"I can't see very much of a connection between the two," he genially allows. "I was paid for what I did and that's all there was to it. I had no rights to the thing, no copyright. Everything was up to the publisher. If they wanted to promote it, they could have. But they never did."

But in another bizarre twist of fate the Black Bat later found greater success overseas than he did in America. When the German publisher Pabel decided to reprint the occasional Black Bat novel in their weekly *KRIMINAL-ROMAN* series, they discovered "Die Schwarzen Fledermaus," as he was known in German, was so popular that in 1962 they retitled it "Fledermaus" and dropped the alternate characters.

"They took all the Black Bats," Daniels explains, "and word for word, character for character, reprinted them. And when they exhausted those, they had writers do originals. They tell me—I can't believe it—but they said they did 900 of them."

The German Black Bat was only slightly changed. Tony Quinn became a Chicago lawyer and in one 1967 novel, married Carol Baldwin. The series was modernized for the sexy 1960s, as the American-style titles like "H-Bombe in Blond," "Playboys u. Blondinen" and "Der Killer kam im Smoking" suggest.

Not owning the copyright, Daniels received no royalties for the German incarnation of his

character. He received no credit, either. The original series had appeared under the house pseudonym of G. Wayman Jones, which in Germany became G.W. Jones. Later American-sounding pseudonyms like Fred Treath and Jerry Ford were appended to the series, which ran well into the 1970s and might even be going today.

Why did the Black Bat continue to hold his popularity as the shadow of Batman gradually

eclipsed him? Even the man who created him isn't sure.

"I couldn't put a finger on that," Norman Daniels admits. "I really don't know. I suppose it just hit the kids in the right way. It lasted for 11 years, so it must have been fairly good."

THE BATS ORIGIN

by Will Murray

(From "The Bat Strikes," *POPULAR DETECTIVE*, November, 1934)

Clade's brain was working swiftly. He realized that he was a dead man in the eyes of the world. He would not be able to appear in public unless he was carefully and cleverly disguised.

Yet he was one man working alone against the crooks and the corrupt politicians who went hand in glove with the evil forces of the underworld. For that reason he must become a figure of sinister import to all of these people. A strange Nemesis that would eventually become a legendary terror to all of crimedom.

Clade rose and began to pace the floor. He was nervous, restless. Reaction had set in. What he had been through as he sat in the electric chair left him shaky. Far more so than he had realized up to the moment.

He was still thinking. Just what the character would be that he intended to assume was still vague in his mind. He only knew that it would have to be some numbilous [*sic*] creature of the night that lurked in the shadows.

He glanced at the oil lamp burning on a table. Then he swung around, suddenly tense. In the shadows above his head there came a slithering, flapping sort of sound.

Clade leaped back instinctively as something brushed past his cheek. Again the flapping of wings--a weird rustling sound. Terror overcame him for an instant as something brushed

against his hair, caught in a tangled lock. Something that seemed unspeakably evil.

He reached up, tore at it with fingers that had suddenly grown frantic. He flung the thing aside. As he did so he saw that it was a bat. An insectivorous mammal, with its wings formed by a membrane stretched between the tiny elongated fingers, legs and tail.

As the creature hovered above the lamp for an instant it cast a huge shadow upon the cabin wall.

"That's it!" exclaimed Clade aloud. "I'll call myself 'The Bat.'"

BLACK BOOK DETECTIVE

Vol. 20, No. 3

EVERY STORY BRAND NEW

Winter Issue

A Black Bat Mystery Novel

BLIND MAN'S BLUFF

Featuring Tony Quinn,
Nemesis of Crime

By G. WAYMAN JONES



A returning wanderer, a substitute corpse, a faithless girl, a vague-minded musician and a murdered man are all parts of the grim jigsaw of crime that Tony Quinn must fit together!.....

A SHORT LIST OF FORGOTTEN, BUT WELL LOVED PULPS

by Sheldon Jaffery

Many of you are well familiar with how attracted I am to rare pulps. In fact, the rarer, the better is my motto. Although I don't collect pulps, when I run across a rarity, it still makes the blood course through my veins, as waves of adrenalin are thrown off by my pancreas, or whatever it is that shoots out the stuff.

Imagine, if you will, my amazement when my wife and I went to a local flea market recently, she to search for additions to her Flemish dirndl collection, and I to seek out whatever might come my way in the nature of paper ephemera, particularly as I had recently acquired, for investment purposes only, several thousand Bazooka bubblegum wrappers (all of them in mint condition), and I was eager to add to this find. I knew that it would be a difficult task, especially, to find the elusive 1977 Pink which had been printed upside down and fetches up to \$12,000.00 according to the Bubblegum Wrapper Price Guide. Yet I was hoping against hope that I could cull some poor nitwit who was unaware of its value out of one for perhaps a thousand or two. If successful, I planned to wholesale it for double that price to a comic book dealer, since I don't collect bubblegum wrapper either.

After several hours of aimless wandering, I noticed an elderly gentleman at a table right at the edge of the parking lot. The location was so disadvantageous that he had had hardly any custom, and the few people who had stopped by his table were not interested in the shabby issues of Architectural Digest or Tugboat Gazette, even though he was asking but a mere twenty dollars for each issue. I might have

speculated on these, but I was aware that they were more than fully priced according to the current Architectural Digest and Tugboat Gazette Price Guide that I had but recently been browsing through in an odd moment. All of my moments seem odd, ever since the accident, but that's another story.

I asked the old duffer if he had any more interesting magazines, and, to my astonishment, he reached behind him and withdrew from a box that had originally housed kitty litter a small stack of pulps which, to my trained, although noncollecting, eye, were in fairly good condition. When I was able to compose myself after I saw them, I pretended to have suffered a mild seizure which, I lied, often took me at that time of day. The fool believed me. He then acknowledged, at my brazen suggestion, that they were nowhere near as valuable as the magazines he had displayed, but I allowed how I would pay forty dollars for the lot. He cried in gratitude since this was his first sale of the day, he was nearly broke, he had no food, and his social security check, his only source of income, wasn't due for a week. I knew then I should have offered thirty.

A longish story, perhaps, but I wanted to share with you how I acquired the latest additions to my non-collection. As I have stated before, I only write about pulps which I own. The following have been secreted in my bank vault, since they are the rarest of my rarities.

1. *AMAZEMENT ADVENTURES*. August, 1932. Volume 1, Number 6. Populist Publications, Inc. 128 pp. \$.15. Although announced

as a monthly, this was the only issue. Populist often started its numbering with Volume 1, Number 6 in order to fool the Postal Inspectors into believing that there was a valid second class mailing permit for the magazine. Included among the seven stories in the issue were such familiar authors as D.D. Avidson, Walter Morton and Roberto W. Mount.

2. *SKID ROW STORIES*. September, 1939. Volume 1, Number 2. Flop Publishing House. \$.10. 98 pp. Announced quarterly, this was the second and last issue. The first appeared in January, 1936. Notable among the contents were "An Alley in Chinktown" by Donald Hutcherton and T.E. Dixon's poignant novellette, "Buxom Bowery Beauty."

3. *DIRIGIBLE TALES*. December, 1930. Volume 2, Number 4. Pegasus Publishing Co. \$.15. 128 pp. Although this monthly magazine was published for more than fifteen years, most issues were destroyed in fits of rage after having been read. I have seen only thirteen thousand other copies, and all go for astronomical prices. The only author who appeared in every single issue was a retired pilot, Captain Jack Divine, who evidently supplemented his meager pension by writing for this pulp which only paid a twelfth of a cent per word. Indeed, was the only writer, often using such pseudonyms as John Gundersonn, Franklin Roberts and Russett Haveline.

4. *SOUTH POLE STORIES*. September 16, 1919. Volume 72, Number 7. Alsgood & Albright, Inc. \$.20. 144 pp. Announced semi-weekly. This was the only issue under this title. It replaced *NORTH POLE STORIES* which also had but one issue, and was replaced by *WEST SIDE STORIES*, and ill-fated pulps that was scrapped after five issues when its editor, Douglas Ailes, was discovered to have been having an affair with his assistant, Letitia Nerdling, the actual brains in the organization. Both were blacklisted and never edited another pulp. Ailes, when questioned about the affair, smiled enigmatically, according to Groton Hulbert in his study of the publisher, "The Story Mill."

5. *NORTHEAST ROMANCES*. July, 1951. Volume 19, Number 12. Fictionalized House. 128 pp. \$.25. Quarterly. Originally published

as *NORTHEAST STORIES*, this pulp is a particular favorite of mine. This was the last issue that I needed to complete my set. First published in 1894, the total run was 272 issues. I have read every one three times and still revel in the reprints of the fine stories by Jonathan Parish, written while he was a stowaway on the whaler, Algernon, out of New Bedford, Mass. Of course, the practical tips he interspersed on the treatment of projectile vomiting caused by seasickness are put to good use on my annual canoeing vacations. Other familiar fictioneers included popular Dan Cushing and the transvestite, Jean-Baptiste Esterhazy, and one mustn't neglect mentioning the macho poetry of Ronald Servile.

6. *TAME GAME STORIES*. May-June, 1926. Volume 1, Number 3. Tame Game Stories, Inc. 244 pp. Bi-monthly. \$.20. What can one say about this fine magazine that hasn't already been said? I never thought that I would ever see an issue of this rarity, let alone own one of the three issues published. Famous for giving young writers a break, it is the only pulp ever to have purchased a story from Richard Blue or R.F. Waller, whose insights on the nocturnal mating habits of the skink and the gecko, respectively, have never been equaled.

7. *POPULAR EXCAVATING STORIES*. February 6, 1935. Volume 1, Number 1. Magazine Publishing Co. 128 pp. \$.25. Announced as weekly, but this was the only issue. Originally expected to fill a hole in the publisher's stable of offbeat fiction, it met with massive public disinterest, selling only seventeen copies, fifteen of which were purchased by Rosicrucions for use in their arcane rites. This copy is annotated in the margins of the stories in a foreign tongue that I have been unable to translate.

8. *WEIRD YARNS*. February, 1923. Un-numbered. Country Fiction Publishing Corp. \$.20. 144 pp. Monthly. To have found the first, hitherto unknown, issue of this legendary pulp in mint condition boggles the mind. Particularly since the maiden stories of Howard L. Philipsdorf, Ashley S. Clark and Robby Hormel are featured. The most thrilling thing, however, was when I discovered that each had personally autographed the issue. My cup truly runneth over.

9. **GORY STORIES.** September, 1933. Volume 12, Number 3. Mangood Publications. 144 pp. \$.10. Monthly. This was a title change from *DRUGSTORE TALES* and is historically significant as being the first sex and sadism pulp. It featured writers such as Russ Grayling, Wayne Roget, Wyatt Blissing, Arthur J. Brooks and E. Hoffercoast. Grayling, as we now know, was the pseudonym of William Morley, and Roget is more familiarly known as Mitchell Afflon, also known as the fastest scourge in the dungeon and author of the never-to-be-forgotten classic, "Reverly in Heck." As well-written as the stories were in this issue, they couldn't compare to the lurid cover with several cowed cretins torturing and mutilating a score of young, nude, beautiful virgins. The cover on this copy is, unfortunately, stained with a substance that I've been unable to either identify or remove. You'd think the former owner would have taken better care of it.

10. **SAUCY FANTASTIC LOVE NOVELS.** February, 1935. Volume 15, Number 3. News-mongers Magazine Co. \$.15. 128 pp. Bi-monthly. This pulp was sold under the counter because of the lascivious nature of its contents. An interesting policy of the magazine was that all of the authors were required to pose naked for a so-called "art" spread in the center of the magazine. That wasn't so bad when such popular regulars as Helena D. Vini, Andrea Childress, Barbetta Duke or Coquette la Coq were featured, but who cares about seeing Raymond Welch and Alan Burt Seltzer in the buff.

Well, enough reminiscing among the fading pages of the past. One last thing, though. If anyone has a copy of *JUGULAR STORIES*, I'd like to buy it, especially the famous third issue with the distinctive red cover that was suppressed by the authorities after only one day on the newsstands in the mistaken belief that it was a Communist Party house organ.

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The Whisperer Prowls

And Killers Crawl Into Their Holes



*The man
with the
hypo rushed in*

Smashing Detective Novelette

By ALEXIS ROSOFF

HE WHO ALSO WHISPERS!

by Mark R. Leonard

"Fingering a week's growth of stubble on his chin, the Whisperer - nemesis of all lawbreakers - seated himself in the chair of Tony the Barber. A shudder coursed over his gaunt frame as he glanced at his own dissipated countenance reflected in the mirror. Dark shadows under the eyes; face unnaturally flushed. The Whisperer blinked and looked away. Last evening's bacchanalian revel had taken more than its toll of him this time."

The February 1934 issue of *TEN DETECTIVE ACES* contained its usual array of crime-smashing detectives and costumed heroes. There was the Moon Man, there was the Cobra, there was Wade Hammond. And, there was the Whisperer! Aha, you say, a previously unknown Wildcat Gordon story, predating by some two-and-a-half years *THE WHISPERER* pulp. But no, *TEN DETECTIVE ACES* was not a Street & Smith

**He had been given that
street name since a bullet
had smashed his larynx and
left his voice a croaking
whisper**

publication and this Whisperer was not THE Whisperer (not even close!).

The Whisperer in the present case was a non-costumed crime fighter featured in "The Whisperer Prowls." No secret identity here, as all the crime world knew that his real name was Brady and that he was a member of the police

force. He had been given that street name (apparently by the crime world) since a bullet had smashed his larynx and left his voice a croaking whisper.

In this story, Brady is portrayed as a man full of bitterness who lives in a world of "what if?" and drinks hard in order to presumably forget. Deep personal angst drips from each page. The Whisperer is a tragic figure, someone who is forced to live in a world that has not seen his dreams fulfilled. In older times, the story would have been called a Greek tragedy. Yes, it is painful to view a man who has been dealt the poorest hand ever given in life. You see, because of the bullet and the resultant whisper, Brady believes his life is... Well, we are given a deep insight into Brady's innermost thoughts early in the story:

"What if he did drink to excess when off-duty? People had no way of knowing that liquor gave him relief from the constant pain in his throat and helped him forget the cheap gunman's bullet that had smashed his larynx and left him a croaking whisperer. Brady, the Whisperer, who would never wear a commissioner's shield because he could not make political and after-dinner speeches or give orders in a commanding voice."

Oh puh-leeze, get a life already. If ever there was a need for Bill W. and his Alcoholics Anonymous, this is it!

The opening paragraph of this article is the opening paragraph of the story. From the onset, the reader is taught that this character is destructive - to himself and to those he views as the criminal element. That old proverb used as a basis for countless stories certainly applies

here - there is none so dangerous as he who has nothing to lose. Brady believes he has already lost all, which makes him the consummate dangerous man.

In addition to bestowing the aforementioned character trait, the author seems to have trouble deciding whether the Whisperer, is progressive or a derelict of the past. He constantly makes reference to Brady being of the old school and has him continually chide those "new-fangled scientifically trained detectives." However, the Whisperer uses a few tricks which would have done Doc Savage proud. To wit:

1) On several occasions he insets a dish a soft colorless wax in the palm of his hand shaking hands with one of his suspects. He does this to obtain their thumb print. He has a thumb print from a crime scene and eventually makes a match which helps solve the crime.

2) Upon discovering that the fountain pen in the pocket of one of the suspects is actually a hypodermic syringe, he presses on the plunger to splash a stream of the contents on the paper he is using to make his notes. he then takes the paper to the chemical laboratory of the police department for analysis. This gives him a second large clue which he uses to solve the case.

3) He deduces that one of the murderers in the case is left-handed based upon the heavier bruises being on the right side of the murdered man's throat. (No one else on the case reached this conclusion.)

The result is an enigma.

Another trait given by the author is that time-honored plot device known as "the Burroughsian maneuver." What pray tell is that? It is simply the science of having the hero come across that desperately needed clue, find that missing person, etc. by the most astronomically-unlikely-stretch-your- imagination-to-the-limits-of-mere-mortal-comprehension- happenstance-of-miracle-upon-miracle coincidences. Even with all the innovative techniques listed

above, the Whisperer makes the case only after receiving the key clue through the Burroughsian maneuver. More on that later.

In terms of action, there is little occurring directly on stage during the story. Even the villain is dispatched by someone else while the Whisperer is handcuffed and leg-tied. In some ways, the Whisperer reminds me of an alcoholic ancestor of Lt. Columbo. Never physically active, but always like a small Scottish terrier nipping at the heels of a foe who thinks him much duller than he is.

However, unlike the television detective, the Whisperer IS much duller than his foe at

From the onset, the reader is taught that this character is destructive - to himself and to those he views as the criminal element.

times. The reader, and all criminals, know that when Brady took was cold sober, clean shave, and stunk to heaven of bay rum, it signaled he was "on the prowl" (i.e. working on a case). On several instances, Brady is at a loss to understand how the criminal element know he is on a case. It irritates him that several people somehow seem to be able to correctly forecast his moves, among them a crime figure who sees him getting a shave and a bay rum from Tony the Barber (with the former immediately initiating an advance warning system), a cab driver who notices the tell-tale signs and wishes him luck on the current hunt (and drops him at the office of one of the suspects without the Whisperer even telling him where he wanted to go), and a crimelord who tells Brady he knows he is on the prowl (since he did not take a drink at a night club).

The story itself can be summarized very briefly. It opens with Brady receiving the aforementioned initiation back to fighting status readiness by Tony the Barber (just like Lee Marvin in *Cat Ballou*). Tony mentions his daughter who received her job at City Hall through Brady and his son who works uptown for a lawyer. Brady is observed by the person who initiates the warning. He is then assigned to solve the murder of Goldfarb the jeweler. He examines the evidence and finds a thumb print on the victim's glasses (presumably that everyone else missed) and concludes they belong to one of the killers. He narrows the list of suspects to a few and begins to visit each to see if they are left-handed and to secretly obtain their thumb print. He visits a crimelord and learns that the victim had just received \$100,000 in cash from the crimelord and \$20,000 was in hundred dollar bills. The crimelord's attorney, Fogle, acted as intermediary. One day's work is done.

The next morning finds Brady back in the chair of Tony the Barber. Tony then makes the Burroughsian denouement that his son, Mike, has just visited him for the first time in six months and has changed for the worse. However, he did give his father five new one hundred dollar bills, saying it was a bonus from his boss, Fogle the attorney. In rapid succession, the Whisperer visits Fogle, spies the hypodermic in Fogle's pocket and takes the sample, talks to Mike and forces him to shake hands with his left hand (since he remembered him as a strong left-handed pitcher), and leaves the office with the thumb prints of both Fogle and Mike by using the wax trick.

Brady returns to the police lab to have the thumb prints and the chemical from the syringe analyzed. Once completed, he returns to Fogle's office and tells Mike that he knows he choked the victim. Fogle sneaks up and knocks Brady unconscious. Upon regaining consciousness, Brady finds himself handcuffed and a belt securing his feet. He tells Mike that Goldfarb did not die from the choking but from the poison from Fogle's syringe. Mike then explains that Goldfarb attacked Fogle when they could not decide how to split the \$100,000. Mike grabbed Goldfarb by the throat and grappled

with him in an effort to help his boss, who was down and being kicked by Goldfarb. After they fell to the floor, Mike explained, Goldfarb went limp and was dead. He concluded he had killed him. Fogle then gave Mike some of the money and told him to leave town.

The Whisperer tells Mike that Fogle killed Goldfarb by using the syringe during Mike's fight and that Fogle had planned to frame Mike for the murder using Mike's flight and possession of the stolen money as evidence.

Thus convinced of Fogle's duplicity, Mike attacks his boss when he latter returns. In the ensuing fight, Mike strangles Fogle and is in turn poisoned by a stab from the syringe. The Whisperer watches helplessly and struggles in a futile effort to free himself from his bonds.

After Mike's funeral, Brady gives Tony \$99,000 from the money Fogle stole from the crimelord and tells him it came from an anonymous admirer of his son. Tony offers Brady some bay rum. But, since he need no longer be "on the prowl", Brady refuses and says he is craving a different rum; the implication being that it is time for him to drink and forget.

The tag at the end of the story promised "Another Whisperer Story Coming Soon," but I have not been able to locate any other appearance in *TEN DETECTIVE ACES* or any other detective pulp. Maybe there is one out there somewhere. Or, just maybe Brady is still sitting in a speakeasy, drinking. Drinking to ease his tormented soul and to entice the waves of forgetfulness that he so tragically craved. I, for one, will not forget my first and only meeting with this specter of days long past.

Perhaps it is fitting to close with the last paragraph of the story:

"Brady, the Whisperer, shambled away to the nearest speakeasy. The small-fry denizens of the underworld could come out of the holes. A new ache in his bullet-torn throat was bothering him. He was going to drown his secret sorrow."

*The Fourth Episode in the
Murderous Career of
Dr. Yen Sin*



THE MYSTERY OF THE FACELESS MEN

By DONALD E. KEYHOE

MORTALLY wounded, the second Chinese crumpled over and fell. Michael Traile swiftly bent to make sure the man was not shamming. As he wheeled back, a look of amazement came into his bronzed face. Stealing toward Garrison was a man who might have been his twin!

Feature for feature, they were identical. But for the grim, set look of the stranger's face he could not have told them apart. Suddenly Garrison turned. As he saw his double an expression of terror flashed into his eyes. He jumped back with a hoarse cry. The other man's hand whipped from his coat pocket. Traile sprang as he saw the gun. Garrison's double swung around with a whistling intake of breath.

He averted the gun, then frantically jerked it back as Garrison leaped. Traile's steel fingers closed on his wrist. With a queer moan, the other man dropped the weapon. His clenched fist crashed on Garrison's jaw, but before he could strike again Traile landed a quick left hook. There was a brittle sound, and to Traile's astonishment a crack ran across the man's left cheek. The stranger reeled back, clawing at the spot.

In sudden understanding, Traile sprang after him. His hand flicked out, and a cracked moulage mask of Garrison's features came away in his grasp. Then his blood seemed to turn into ice.

The man before him had no face!

*The November-December
Issue Will Be Out
October 5th*


DR. YEN SIN

Ad for the announced but never released fourth issue of Dr. Yen Sin.

CALLING DR. YEN SIN

by Nick Carr

Preface: According to the American Illustrated Medical Dictionary a physician is an authorized practitioner or medicine. A surgeon is defined as a practitioner of surgery. One individual who qualified in both specializations was Dr. Yen Sin. Regardless of what one may think of him, he was indeed very well qualified for his M.D. degree. Because of this we thought a closer look might be worth the effort.

Unfortunately we have only a limited source of information published under the Popular Publications banner. Today collectors having copies of the magazine are indeed fortunate. The stories are: "The Mystery of the Dragon's Shadow," May-June, 1936; "The Mystery of the Golden Skull," July-August, 1936; "The Mystery of the Singing Mummies," September-October, 1936.

He was a super scientist, an evil genius, and undoubtedly of royal blood as verified by this gesture:

Dr. Yen raised his right hand. An enormously long fingernail, such as once clearly marked the royalty of China.

He was indeed acquainted with the works of one Anton Mesmer who first utilized back in the 18th century, the use of hypnosis as a tool of his profession. Throughout his career, Dr. Yen Sin made frequent use of his technique. Here are two examples:

The first thing the man noticed was Yen Sin's eyes. In the beginning the pupils contracted, then became deadly black points until a tawny yellow was revealed, much like those of a tiger, flecked with green, emerald bright. Abruptly the tawny pupils would enlarge once more into black pools. The one looking at those

orbs experienced a sensation of being drawn into a bottomless pit.

The second involved a young woman:

"Come closer, my child," he spoke. She obeyed. The Yellow Doctor stood up and his oddly filmed eyes gazed down into hers. She stood motionless. The pupils of Yen Sin's eyes were suddenly enlarged to enormous size. The girl swayed. He touched her arm. A shiver ran over her slim form, then both eyes became glassy, dazed. He spoke to her in a queer monotone, the words uttered in a soft, soothing cadence. A full minute went by. He observed a strange, dreamy smile filling her eyes. But then the dazed experience began to fade. She was fully in his power.

The doctor's various hidden quarters, no matter the location, China, New York City, or Washington, D.C., usually held what had to be his private torture chamber and operating arena. Included was a room filled with bottles and various chemicals, test-tubes, retorts and other necessary laboratory equipment. There were shelves with toxicology, medical-surgical texts. Once upon an operating table reposed the body of a man, bound and gagged, still conscious, but close to death. Yen Sin touched the man's sweating temples, then turned and made a few scribbled notations on a pad, after which he left the room as silently as he had entered.

Another time he was observed leaving one dimly lighted area, to step into a nearby room. A panel closed behind him. This time he had on long rubber gloves, with blood on the tops, which he began to remove. He also wore a jacket much like a surgeon's gown, except it was shorter and decorated with braid.

Perhaps the overall results of one of those operations was a while later as Michael Traile (the man who pursued Yen Sin trying to bring him to justice) was drawn into the following sequence.

With him was his companion, Eric Gordon: Traile tiptoed to the doorway through which the flickering light showed. It led to a drawing-room. He took one step inside, then halted, appalled, with Eric gazing white-faced past his shoulder. Two yellow Chinese candles shone down from the head of an open coffin directly before them. As icy shudder went over Traile. He was looking down on the back of a corpse—but the dead man's face was staring upward! With horror, Traile saw the blood-stains which had dyed the man's white collar. Peter Courtland had been decapitated, and his head sewed on again—backwards.

"I'll examine the body," Traile said.

"You're welcome to that part," Eric grimaced. As he went out, Traile stopped over the dead man. The beheading had been done by a skilled hand, for the cut was straight. *The bloodstained stitches also gave evidence of surgical knowledge.* Traile's lips tightened. Unless he was badly mistaken, this was the work of the Yellow Doctor himself.

No doubt in my mind was the fact that Yen Sin had been very cautious probably because of

**He was a super scientist,
an evil genius, and
undoubtedly of royal blood.**

the extensive bleeding due to the severing of the large neck vessels, veins and arteries. I also believe he utilized a so-called subcuticular suture because obviously he was most deliberate,

wanting a clear, almost straight cut in the skin of the dead man. He probably selected a fine thread and some very small needles.

Like Richard Wentworth (The Spider), our Chinese doctor knew how easily it was to disable someone by the simple act of applying pressure to specific areas of the human body:

Suddenly Yen Sin's fingers pressed on a spot at the base of Traile's neck. A terrific pain shot through his head, as though his brain was busting. A cry rose to his lips, but his numbing throat made it only a tortured gasp. Paralyzed he lay there like a dead man. He was supposedly unconscious. "There is no danger of him recovering," Yen Sin remarked rather impatiently. "The sleep center of his brain is inhibited. He will not awaken until I release the pressure."

(Not exactly the truth because Traile's childhood injury had saved him from unconsciousness. He knew now what he had always suspected—that not even sheer agony, nor a stunning blow, could blot out his wakeful brain. Death was the only sleep he would ever know.)

Later Yen Sin told Traile:

"You must possess a peculiar brain, to have been so unaffected by my nerve blocking. I am sorry I have no time to examine you."

(In the above incident Traile's spinal nerves were paralyzed. Their function is sensation and motion, with distribution going to the trunk, neck, arms and legs. Also effected is the eleventh cranial nerve with distribution to the larynx and pharynx.)

The one thing that gave Dr. Yen Sin much concern was the fact that he could never quite fathom why Traile never slept. It is the aspect we will explore next.

A medical definition of sleep might be appropriate at this point:

"A period of rest for body and mind, during which volition and consciousness are in partial



or complete abeyance and bodily functions partially suspended."

Traile had been called the "sleepless one," by Sonia Damitri, the young woman who served Yen Sin because her father was a prisoner somewhere in China. Both she and the doctor thought Traile had taken "some queer drug" to keep him awake.

"I suppose," Traile said to Eric Gordon, "it's just as well that they never learn the truth. I'd have been murdered long ago if the Doctor weren't so anxious to learn the secret of my going without sleep. He'd make use of it himself."

At one point Yen Sin ordered Traile kept under constant watch when he was in his Manhattan apartment. Some forty-eight hours elapsed.

"He has just put down the paper he was reading," the observer reported. "He is smoking a cigarette. It must contain some mysterious drug. An expert rifleman could easily kill him from this observation point."

"The secret of that drug is more valuable to me than his death," was Yen Sin's reply.

Later on when Traile was taken prisoner by the Yellow fiend, he was questioned:

"What is the drug which enables you to go without sleep for so long?"

No reply. Yen Sin nodded and the men holding Traile twisted his arms. Drops of perspiration stood out on his forehead. Finally Traile agreed and told him the truth. "Do you expect me to believe such childish lies?"

Yen Sin threatened to kill both Sonia and Eric Gordon. "All right!" Traile said sharply. "Here in the back of my wrist watch...a supply of capsules." Then as Traile jerked loose the watch strap he saw his chance for escape.

During another attempt, Traile was jabbed in the back of his neck by the point of a hypodermic needle. His knees buckled. He slid to the floor, keeping both eyes shut against the pain within his head. Again but for that accident in his childhood he would have been senseless. Placed on a stretcher he ended up again in the hands of Yen Sin.

"Finally he sleeps at last," the Yellow Doctor laughed. "I was beginning to think the man had some occult power."

"Why not finish him off at once?" another spoke.

"Where are your wits?" retorted Yen Sin. "He possesses a secret enabling him to go for days without sleep. With that knowledge I shall be free to use the hours now wasted."

Later both Yen Sin and Traile came face to face once again, and the following incident took place:

The Doctor's eyes fixed themselves on Traile's, growing as if by magic into black, evil pools. "Don't waste the effort, Doctor," Traile told him. "I cannot be hypnotized."

In a conversation with another agent, Eric Gordon was heard to remark:

THE MYSTERY OF

A Novel-Length
Tale of Dr. Yen Sin

By DONALD
E. KEYHOE

*Author of "The Mystery
of the Dragon's
Shadow," etc.*



*Moving east from Washington, Dr. Yen Sin, saffron-skinned scourge
of the Golden Skull, once again locks horns with the Man Who Never
brings with him to turn living men to rainbow colored dust? Why
to be sewed on again—backwards*

"Michael told me that Yen Sin could hypnotize people so they'd forget everything—or else do something he wanted, a long time after he put them to sleep."

"Post-hypnotic suggestion. That explains how that yellow devil keeps people in hand," was the reply.

Indeed the medical history of Traile's is most unique. We have obtained records which contain the notes of an unknown surgeon, written in a hospital located in Jubblepore, India, as follows:

Name: Michael Traile Age: Two (2) years.

THE GOLDEN SKULL



His pierced body sagged, quivering, on the blades.

of the Orient, sets up his hell-base in New York and under the banner Sleeps, and his partner Eric Gordon. What is the ghastly doom he should the flowers in his corpse garden have their heads removed, only —by the surgeon mandarin?

Parents Name: Censored.

Admission of diagnosis: Skull fracture, cause of accident, not specified.

Course of Action: Emergency operation.

Patient's progress notes: Operation appeared successful in every respect at first. However it became apparent the patient did not

sleep at all. Drugs had no effect. He began to lose weight, grow much thinner and was expected to die at any moment.

Medical-surgical aspects: There is a distinct possibility some vital portion of the subject's brain has been scraped, damaged, or destroyed due to surgery, which serve to control

the function of sleep. The subconscious is now unable to take over the mind. Naturally we are aware certain areas of the human brain have specific functions, and suspect that one of the brain lobes is involved—the frontal, parietal, temporal, or occipital. Another theory is also the Hypothalamus as it is concerned with thirst, emotional expression and *sleep*.

Patient's progress notes: At this point the parent brought in a Yoga miracle man over protests of the medical doctor. He claimed he could save the child's life. His method: To relax all the muscles in the entire body completely, plus the utilization of a mechanical device until the patient's mind would be withdrawn from all type of physical action, even though he would remain awake. (Considering there were over five hundred muscles in the human body, divided into voluntary and involuntary muscles, or striated and non-striated muscles, we were concerned.) This process was repeated over and over again until it became a fixed habit. Three months has elapsed. By age two and a half years the patient's health status was improved. About this time, the child's parents decided to return to America. We included confidential reports of patient's progress. Once back in America we were informed the child had a tutor day and night with his mind constantly occupied. A physical instructor was also hired.

Reports sent to us at the age of five years, subject's mental development was equal to one eight or ten. By the age of nine he had the brain of a fourteen year old and thoroughly understood his situation.

End of summary.

Only once during his life, at age twenty seven did Traile ever give an interview about his condition. What he said is as follows:

"When I was a kid I used to wonder about it when people went to sleep. I thought they were sick. My parents finally had to let me know that I wasn't like other people. I didn't mind for a while—it seemed like a lark, doing a lot more than other youngsters—but later I realized what Fate had done to me. It's been a

pretty lonely road. Thus a peculiar circumstance has forced me to dabble in many things—in fact had controlled my entire life."

Epilogue: In the "Valhalla of Scoundrels" there is a room with a large window. A thin breeze rustles the thick curtains now pulled aside to reveal the towering mountains beyond. On one wall, an exquisite Persian tapestry. Chinese gongs hung from the ceiling. A huge brass dragon lamp gives off a pale green light. A tall figure silently enters the room. A thick rug covers the floor. The man's tawny eyes are unblinking, yet to alive. His yellow mandarin

The Doctors eyes fixed themselves on Trailes, growing as if by magic into black, evil pools.

robe blend with a golden chair in front of the window.

Dr. Yen Sin sits down and lifts a book from a small nearby table. One enormously long fingernail turns several pages. It pauses on one particular chapter titled: The Human Brain.

A slight smile penetrates his face as he reads aloud, his tones much like that of hissing serpent weaving out into the vast stillness of the room:

"The brain is like an office to co-ordinate the different functions of the body with one another." He pauses and looks out of the window. "Someday, Michael Traile," he hissed, "you and I will yet look into that face of yesteryear and find what memories still rest there. It is no fun walking the corridors of time over a tricky road. But we shall do it!"

RARE PULPS

by John P. Gunnison

Last issue, Sheldon Jaffery brought up an interesting way of voting for rarest pulps...just pick out several of your rarest magazines from your own collection (or non-collection as Sheldon would have it) and list them! Thanks to Dan Gobbett for continuing that piece with a set of rarities of his own and not to be outdone...I too will make a list.

Now this doesn't mean you can't get in on the fun...just sit down and jot down a couple of your rarest pulps and send them off to me care of The Pulp Collector. Each and every person who writes in with their rare pulps will be published.

For my list I took the pulps of which I had only seen three or fewer copies of in my lifetime. Being only 35 years old makes it difficult to believe that I have seen a lot of pulps...but please keep in mind that I also am a dealer and have had many more pulps slip through my fingers than actually stick onto my bookshelves at home. I list these pulps in alphabetical order only.

BEST DETECTIVE MAGAZINE 12/47 Vol. 1 #1. Published by Exclusive Detective Stories Inc. 130 pages. Editor is unknown. An interesting pulp with an equally bizarre cover in which two gangs...one gang seen with a .45 automatic totting blonde, hiding behind gravestones firing at another at point blank range. Estimated value - \$10.00.

BLUE STEEL MAGAZINE 03/32 Vol. 1 #2. Published by Popular Publications Inc. 128 pages. Editor is unknown (although it should be Harry Steeger). Cover was painted by William Reusswig. Most everyone should be familiar with the story behind this magazine. But in case you don't, *BLUE STEEL* was the alteration of *GANG*

WORLD at the last moment so as to please the mayor of New York. Same stories, same page count...different covers and supposedly only distributed in New York City, which accounts for it's extreme rarity. Estimated value - \$100.00.

BOYS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE 09/36 Vol. 1 #1. Published by Layne Publishing Corporation. 128 pages. Editor is unknown. Cover painted by Milburn C. Rosser. An interesting pulp that has one major difference than any other pulp I've ever seen...single column stories. What??? If you check each and every pulp in your collection, you should find the publisher has divided his page into two columns. It is easier reading and you can squeeze the print closer together because of this and get more words per page. *BOYS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE* has a single column and the type is pretty large with some extra space between lines. The issue also includes a comic section. Estimated value - \$75.00.

COMPLETE AVIATION NOVEL MAGAZINE 09/29 Vol. 1 #6. Published by Ramer Reviews Inc. 130 pages. Editor is listed as William L. Mayer. Cover painted by Eugene Frandzen. This is the only copy I've seen of this particular issue, although another issue sold at Pulpcon a couple of years ago in the auction. Ramer Reviews also published the famous *ZEPPELIN STORIES* and a few other publications before the founder Frank Armer (rAmer...get it????) decided to go underground and produce the Spicy line of pulps. The magazine has incredible number of pages...13 in all, of advertisements. At this time I'm uncertain of the number of issues actually produced, but I'm almost convinced that this had to been a continuation from another magazine because of the number of issues listed. Estimated value - \$75.00.

DOC SAVAGE Summer/49 Vol. 31 #1. Published by Street & Smith. 130 pages. Editor is listed as Daisy Bacon. Cover painted by George Rozen. "Up From Earth's Center" is possibly the hardest Doc to acquire. Limited print run and possibly a large number of returns doomed this and The Shadow to limbo. The cover is quite interesting and I only noticed this when I pulled the magazine out to get the publishing data; Doc is wearing the same clothes and has his shirt torn somewhat in the same manner as the first issue way back in 1933. As far as rarity, I've seen just slightly more than 3 copies of this issue. Which puts it just outside of my standards. But what the heck...it was one bugger of an issue to collect. Estimated value - \$150.00.

GEM DETECTIVE Fall/46 Vol. 1 #1. Published by H.C. Blackerby as Atomic Action Magazine. 98 pages. Editor is listed as Raymond W. Porter. Cover is painted by Ramsey Parsons. This low budget affair had a companion magazine...*CHIEF DETECTIVE* which is equally as bad and rare. I had both copies for sale almost 5 years ago and have not seen another copy until this year when I purchased it at Pulpcon. The cover is dingy and almost impossible to view without thinking your eyes have gone bad. It must have been the printing process since the quality of the print job throughout the magazine is horrid. There is only one author of whose name I recognize, Bruno Fischer. Of all the abuse I've heaped upon the name of Harold Hersey (most of which I do in fun since I love his magazines)...I would have to rate this a very poor second cousin to any of Harold's opus's. Estimated value - \$25.00.

GEORGE BRUCE'S SKY FIGHTERS No date. Published by Langley House Inc. 146 pages. Editor is not listed but it must have been George Bruce himself. Cover is painted by Eugene Frandzen. Of all the different George Bruce magazines, this particular issue is one of the rarest. I've only seen three copies of this particular magazine. Jack Deveny has one, George Hocutt has one and the last one I own. I'm quite certain there are more but I couldn't tell you any. This pulp is interesting in that it doesn't

have a date, nor does it even have a contents page. It also doesn't have a letters column, an editor's page or even any ads excepting the inside front cover, and the inside of the back cover and the back cover itself. There is an ad appearing on page 65 that announces George Bruce appears in Sky Fighters for 10 cents monthly. Since the cover price of this magazine was 15 cents, that the ad must refer to Sky Fighters of the Thrilling Group of magazines. Assuming that George Bruce must have had an incredible ego I wonder if this magazine was nothing but a vanity issue published by himself, for himself. If so this would account for its rarity. Estimated value - \$75.00.

MURDER MYSTERIES 04/29 Published by Magazine Publishers Inc. 94 pages. Editor is Harold Hersey. Cover is painted by Ray Wardel. I had to include a Hersey magazine in my list. I've got quite a few including *GANGLAND STORIES*, *GANGSTER STORIES*, *COURTROOM STORIES*, *COMPLETE GANG NOVEL MAGAZINE*, *DETECTIVE TRAILS*, *MIRACLE SCIENCE AND FANTASY STORIES*, *MOBS*, *MURDER STORIES*, *RACKETEER STORIES*, *ZOOM* and others. The reason for choosing this one is simple...I've only seen the one copy of this title. According to Harold Hersey himself, this was the tenth title he produced. In fact in the back of the magazine...just before 13 pages of business ads and classified ads, Harold Hersey in a Charles Foster Kane (Citizen Kane) like fit of editorializing lists his "Policy Behind the Hersey Magazines." If you have seen Citizen Kane you will understand the similarities, when Kane upon buying a newspaper decides to print on the front page his code of ethics in newspaper publishing. Just like Kane, Hersey piles on as much B.S. as possible. (See next page.) The issue is full of unknown authors excepting Edwin Burkholder, who has been published in many other magazines. Estimated value - \$100.00.

RIDERS OF THE RANGE 08-09/31. Published by the Good Story Magazine Company. Editor is assumed to be Harold Hersey. 128 pages. Cover is painted by Walter Baumhofer. (A rumor was revealed at Pulpcon this year that

Harold Hersey only bought Walter's preliminary paintings and published them as the covers.) This issue like other Hersey magazines are rarities by themselves. This issue continues a scheme that Harold used on several other magazines...that of continuing the numbering from previous issues of the same series. Perhaps Mr. Hersey thought if the reader picked up the magazine and saw page numbering from 263 on up they would think this magazine was in for the long ride. This like many other Hersey magazines had a hefty price of 20 cents. Hefty that is for the depression and the number of unknown authors printed therein. Estimated value - \$25.00.

STRANGE DETECTIVE STORIES 11/33 Published by Nickel Publications Inc. Vol. 4 #6. Editor is listed as Ralph Daigh. 160 pages. Cover is painted by Clifford Benton. This magazine had 4 separate issues published. I happen to own 3 out of the 4. A friend of mine has the fourth, yet I have only seen one additional copy besides the ones mentioned above. Continued from the title *NICKEL DETECTIVE*, *STRANGE DETECTIVE STORIES* includes some excellent authors, including Erle Stanley Gardner, Robert E. Howard, Norman Daniels, Arthur J. Burks and more. Nickel Publications went the opposite route when it's very thin 5 cent publication bit the dust, by swelling *Strange Detective Stories* to 160 pages for only 15 cents. For all the excellent authors and the large size of this magazine I can only assume that the publisher killed the magazine because of poor management. Estimated value - \$75.00.

TALES OF MAGIC AND MYSTERY 12/27 Published by Personal Arts Company. Vol. 1 #1. Editor has been reported to be Walter Gibson. 64 pages. Cover artist is unknown. Just like *Strange Detective*...*Tales of Magic* only published 4 issues. Luck being the same I only have 3 out of 4 issues. I had purchased the 4th issue, but it arrived coverless and I didn't keep it. Besides the 3 I own and the coverless issue I returned...I've only seen 1 other copy. Interior illustrators include Earle Bergey and the number of excellent illustrations show the class in which

this magazine was published. It is only too bad that the magazine didn't flourish as it is a truly unique magazine. Estimated value - \$125.00.

THRILLS OF THE JUNGLE 12/29 Published by Good Story Magazine Company. Vol. 1 #1. Editor not shown but assumed to be Harold Hersey. 128 pages. Cover is painted by Walter Baumhofer. Before you begin to think this is an article about Harold Hersey and his pulps, you must understand I am a big fan and collector of Hersey. This happens to be only the third copy I've ever seen of this pulp and is the one and only appearance of this title. The cover by Walter Baumhofer was different from his other works for Hersey. It is more complete with greater detail than others. As mentioned previously, Harold Hersey was reported to have purchased the artist's sample roughs and had them published as complete covers. Either Walter Baumhofer made this a complete cover painting, or as a young artist decided to make his sample piece more detailed to make the sale. Similar to other Hersey pulps...the price is high at 20 cents and the content is low with known authors. Although, come to think of it, I was shown a letter that Robert E. Howard wrote to have one of his stories included in the next issue, but alas that issue nor Robert E. Howard's story appeared together. Estimate value - \$100.00.

TWO BOOK SAUCY STORIES Fall/37 Published by Movie Digest Inc. No volume or number. 320 pages. Cover artist is unknown. This pulp is nothing more than two *Saucy* pulps bound together. A *SAUCY MOVIE TALES* and a *SAUCY DETECTIVE*, both listing a publication month of June on their individual contents page, but no year of publication. According to the invaluable reference work: "Mystery, Detective, and Espionage Fiction" by Mike Cook and Steve Miller the date for publication of those particular issues were 1937. Although the June 1937 issue doesn't have exactly the same contents as they list in the book, I can only assume that was because Movie Digest wasn't known as a particularly careful publisher. The pulp is filled with amateurish art of topless females and the writing

resembles the worse possible prose. Estimated value - \$125.00.

There you have it...my baker's dozen of favorite rare magazines in my collection. The question is...how do I really know these are that rare? I don't but it is fun just listing them and trying to give you some interesting tidbits about them.

If you have some rare interesting pulps in your collection, how about sending an article just like this one in to be published. Send the articles to: Pulp Collector - 4704 Col. Ewell Court - Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772. Thanks!

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF WILD BILL CLANTON

By SAM WALSER (ROBERT E. HOWARD)



The Purple Heart of Erlik

*Arlene has defamed the ruby by
her touch; now the ruby and its
Chinese high priest plan terrible
vengeance.*

*She laughed and,
with a choking cry,
Woon Yuen turned the
gun, fired at her.*



by Rick Lai

During his brief lifetime, Robert E. Howard (1906-36) created series heroes for various markets. Best known of Howard's heroes are those who appeared in weird fantasy stories, Conan the Barbarian, King Kull, Solomon Kane and others. Somewhat lesser known are Howard heroes in the exotic adventure genre, Francis X. Gordon and Kirby O'Donnell. There were also heroes created for the prize fighter pulps, Sailer Steve Costigan and Dennis Dorgan. In the field of mystery and detective, Howard invented Steve Harrison. For the "spicy" market, Howard recorded the sexual escapades of Wild Bill Clanton under the by-line of Sam Walser.

Of the six stories which Howard wrote about Clanton, five were published in *SPICY-ADVENTURE STORIES*: "She Devil" (April

1936), "Desert Blood" (June 1936), "The Dragon of Kao Tsu" (September 1936), "The Purple Heart of Erlik" (November 1936) and "Murderer's Grog" (January 1937). A sixth story, "Ship in Mutiny," was discovered decades later among Howard's papers. All of Clanton's exploits were published in paperback as *THE SHE DEVIL* (Ace Fantasy Books, 1983). The same volume also includes two other "spicy" tales by Howard, "Guns of Khartum" and "Daughters of Feud." "The Purple Heart of Erlik" was also reprinted in Tony Goodstone's anthology, *THE PULPS* (Chelsea House, 1970). "She Devil" was also in *THE BOOK OF ROBERT E. HOWARD* (Zebra, 1976).

Clanton, an American seaman, was probably the least admirable of Howard's heroes.

His romantic relationships with women came extremely close to rape. He was also a gun-runner who fueled the fires of war by selling arms to the highest bidder. Perhaps Clanton's most deplorable business venture was "black-birding," the practice of kidnaping Kanaka tribesmen from South Seas islands and bringing them to Queensland, Australia, as laborers.

The practice of "black-birding" was tantamount to slave-trading, and was outlawed in Queensland during 1904. In "She Devil," Clanton took over a ship, the SAUCEY WENCH, and used it for "black-birding." In "Ship in Mutiny," Clanton was still in command of the vessel but shifted its business activity to the more respectable enterprise of pearl-poaching. This change of direction was most likely caused by the banning of "black-birding" in Queensland. Probably the events of "She Devil" transpired in 1903 (one year before "black-birding" became illegal), and those of "Ship in Mutiny" took place in 1905 (a year after the authorities outlawed "black-birding").

Clanton was most likely in his early twenties in "She Devil." He was a tall muscular man with black hair and blue eyes. By the time of "She Devil," Clanton was known throughout the South Seas as a "wild adventurer roaring on a turbulent career that included everything from pearl-diving to piracy." To have gained such a formidable reputation in his twenties, Clanton must have started his exploits as a sailor in his late teens. Most likely he was born around 1880.

At the start of "She Devil," Clanton had been first mate aboard the DAMNATION, a British ship of dubious endeavors. Playing draw poker, the captain of the DAMNATION lost his share of the cargo (the exact nature of which is never revealed by Howard) to Clanton. Not fond of Americans in general, the captain got peeved at Clanton in particular by this action. Welshing on his bet, the captain with their aid of the crew cast Clanton adrift in an open boat somewhere in the Pacific.

It was Clanton's fortune to be picked up by the SAUCEY WENCH, a ship commanded by Captain Bully Harrigan. The SAUCEY WENCH

was looking for an island called Aragoa. Hidden on this island was a barrel full of ambergris, a valuable whale secretion used in the perfume industry. Prior to picking up Clanton, Harrigan had possessed a map with Aragoa's location, but the captain's mistress, Raquel O'Shane, had thrown the chart overboard during a domestic quarrel.

The title of this story refers to Raquel. Of Spanish-Irish decent, Raquel was a beautiful woman with foamy black hair, ivory skin, and a fiery disposition. Somewhere on the west coast of the United States, Raquel had worked in a saloon on Water Street, the dangerous district of a Barbary Coast town. Raquel asserted that all she did was dance in the saloon, but there are suggestions by Howard that she entertained the customers in other ways. After knifing a drunk in the saloon one night, Raquel came aboard the SAUCEY WENCH and begged Harrigan to take her away from certain arrest by the police.

Harrigan's initial reaction to the loss of the chart was to throw Raquel overboard as well, but Clanton, who was strongly attracted to the captain's mistress, prevented this by falsely claiming to know the location of Aragoa. After finding an island which was certainly not Aragoa, Clanton tricked Harrigan by leading him into an ambush proved by the local native. Leaving Harrigan to be slain by the natives, Clanton took command of the SAUCEY WENCH. With Raquel now as his mistress, Clanton proceeded to engage in the abominable "black-bird" trade. His plan was to sail to the Solomon Islands and abduct a bunch of natives to work in Queensland. Needless to say, the conclusion of "She Devil" was not exactly morally uplifting.

As noted earlier, Clanton's career as a "black-bird" was cut short when the hellish trade was outlawed in 1904. Clanton must have then decided that pearl-poaching was the most profitable enterprise open to him. Around 1905, the events of "Ship in Mutiny" unfolded. A British warship was chasing the SAUCEY WENCH, but Clanton eluded it.

The British authorities were the least of Clanton's worries. A mutiny by the SAUCEY

WENCH's crew forced Clanton and Raquel to seek a refuge on a South Seas island. There a brutal tribal chieftain lusted after Raquel. Breaking the neck of the island king, Clanton restored the island's former ruler, a beautiful queen, to the throne. The ringleaders of the mutiny aboard the SAUCEY WENCH killed each other in a quarrel. The resulting leadership gap permitted Clanton to resume his position as master of the vessel. The island queen proposed that Clanton become her consort, but the American adventurer declined because Raquel was "his girl." The story concluded with Clanton and Raquel returning to the SAUCEY WENCH.

Raquel and Clanton did not live happily ever-after. There is a tremendous gap in Clanton's known career during which Raquel disappeared from his life. It is not clearly known what role Clanton played in World War I (1914-18), but the internal evidence of the series suggests that he was in Libya sometime during that great global conflict. During 1911-12, Italy had gone to war with the Ottoman Empire over Libya. Although the Turks eventually signed a treaty recognizing Italian control of Libya, the Libyan population continued to resist the Italian occupation. By 1915, Italy and Turkey were on opposite sides of World War I. Turkish agent went to Libya to assist the local rebels. One of these agents was probably Muhammad Pasha, a Turk who claimed to have undergone imprisonment by the Italian colonial authorities due to Clanton's intervention.

By the time of "Desert Blood," Muhammad was no longer in prison. Set in the 1920's, the story recorded a visit by Clanton to Tebessa, Algeria. He was running guns to Berbers rebelling against the French in neighboring Morocco. There was an actual Berber uprising during 1921-26.

Installed in Tripoli, Libya's capital, Muhammad Pasha also wanted guns. Apparently he wanted to give them to Libyan rebels whose armed struggle against Italian imperialism was not suppressed until 1932. The rebellion was in full force in Tripolitana, the province in which Tripoli is located, until the Italians gained a firm control over the area 1923. Since the Berbers

began their rebellion in 1921 and the area around Tripoli was pacified in 1923, the most likely year for the events of "Desert Blood" is 1922.

Most of Clanton's recorded exploits only involved one principal female character. "Desert Blood" had four major female protagonists, but Clanton only got to go to bed with one of

Clanton, an American Seaman, was probably the least admirable of Howards Heroes.

them. Miss Augusta Evans was a New England schoolteacher vacationing in Algeria. Described as "handsome enough in a cold reserved way," Miss Evans viewed Clanton as a rogue and a libertine. Zulaykha was Muhammad Pasha's sister. Married to an Arab sheik, she forced her husband to set a trap for Clanton in the desert. Her hope was to capture Clanton and force him to turn over the weapons consigned to the Berbers. Zouza was an Algerian courtesan employed by Zulaykha as bait to lure Clanton into the trap. Aicha was the concubine of one of Zulaykha's accomplices. Aicha fell in love with Clanton and aided in his escape from Zulaykha's trap.

Aicha helped Clanton in a very original manner. While Clanton was being held prisoner in the desert, Aicha stole Miss Evans' clothes. Riding close to Zulaykha's camp in Miss Evan's clothes, Aicha lured the Arab tribesmen after her because they could not resist the opportunity to capture a western woman. While the Arabs chased Aicha, Clanton overcame the minimal opposition left in the camp and fled to freedom. Reunited with Aicha, Clanton promised to take her to his ship as his mistress. Aicha had assumed the role which Raquel O'Shane had held nearly two decades previously.

Later in the 1920's, Clanton shifted his gun-running activities from northern Africa to south-

west Asia in "Murderer's Grog." Clanton went to the Soviet Union where he purchased a large quantity of rifles from the Communist government. Hauling his cargo aboard a train of camels, Clanton made a perilous trek through Afghanistan bribing officials at every turn. Passing through the Khyber Pass, he arrived at Peshawur in British India. Two tribes in the virtually independent territory between India and Afghanistan were about to go to war with one another. Clanton intended to make a handsome profit by selling his weapons to one of the tribes. In order to cross into the dangerous territory, Clanton needed the protection of Baber Ali Khan, a powerful Afghan chieftain.

Things weren't going right for Clanton in Peshawur. The British deputy commissioner gave Clanton twenty-four hours to get out of town. Mizra Pasha, a Persian acting as Baber Ali Khan's agent in Peshawur, was procrastinating about giving Clanton a pass into the border territories. Clanton's love life was equally unhappy. He attempted to romance Sonya Ornaoff, an enigmatic Russian beauty living in the native quarter of Peshawur. After pumping Clanton for information, Sonya refused to go to bed with him.

Sonya was actually a Soviet spy. Apparently the Soviets had sold Clanton the rifles with the intention of hijacking them in Peshawur. Baber Ali Khan had approved Clanton's passage into the border areas, but Sonya had persuaded Mizra Pasha not to give the American adventurer the necessary credentials.

Local gun-runners in Peshawur were also upset by Clanton's presence. They viewed the American as unnecessary competition. One of these gun-runners arranged to have Clanton slipped bhang (hashish) in a bar. The intent of this subterfuge was that the drug would drive Clanton mad and cause him to attack the deputy commissioner with whom he had recently quarreled.

However, the effect of the drug was quite different because Clanton had just left a heated argument with Sonya. Arriving at her quarters in an insane rage, Clanton overheard her and Mizra Pasha plotting to withhold Baber Ali Khan's pass from him. Seizing the pass, Clanton

threw Mizra out of Sonya's house. Clanton then proceeded to rape Sonya. The Russian spy screamed.

At this point, Howard's narrative becomes deliberately vague. The text is not clear whether Clanton desisted from any further brutal behavior or carried his actions to their conclusion. When Sonya is last described, Clanton was looking down at "where she lay weeping in rage, shame and humiliation." In possession of Baber Ali Khan's safe-conduct, Clanton exited Sonya's room.

Historical research indicated that "Murderer's Grog" most likely took place in the late 1920's. The Soviet Union began to seek influence in Afghanistan During 1924. Afghanistan was largely at peace during Clanton's passage from the Soviet Union to India. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that Clanton crossed either during 1924-25 or 1928-29 when Afghanistan was experiencing rebellion against the Amir. Clanton probably then crossed through Afghanistan in either 1926 or 1927. Considering that the Berber rebellion was crushed in 1926, it is extremely probable that Clanton made his decision to seek a new market for gun-running in that year. He probably arrived in Russia in the same year. Considering that it would take Clanton some time to negotiate the purchase of rifles from the Soviet government and undertake a hazardous journey through Afghanistan, it can be conjectured that the American soldier of fortune didn't arrive in Peshawur until 1927.

The name of Howard's villainess, Sonya Ormanoff was derived from the works of Talbot Mundy. Several of Mundy's stories about India concern a beautiful half-Indian, half-Russian spy, Yasmini. In *GUNS OF THE GODS* (1921), Mundy identified Yasmini's mother as Princess Sonia Ormanoff of Tsarist Russia. It should be noted that all Russian names are translated into the Latin alphabet from the Cyrillic alphabet. Therefore, Sonia Omanoff and Sonya Ormanoff could be different western spellings of the same name.

It is chronologically impossible for Mundy's Sonia to be Howard's Sonya. Yasmini, however, could be the mother of the spy of "Murderer's

Grog." Both Yasmini and Sonya Ormanoff had blonde hair. Yasmini's eyes were either brown or blue depending on which of Talbot Mundy's novels you read. Sonya's eyes were grey like those of Vladimir Jakrovitch, and enemy of Howard's Francis X. Gordon. Jakrovitch appeared in "The Country of the Knife" (*COMPLETE STORIES*, August 1936), which was reprinted in *SON OF THE WHITE WOLF* (FAX Collector's Editions, 1977). Both Jakrovitch and Yasmini were active in plots around the Afghan-Indian border in the first decade of the twentieth century. Perhaps the two had an affair which resulted in the birth of the future Soviet spy known as Sonya Ormanoff.

Leaving Afghanistan and India behind him, Clanton went to the Far East. At about a dozen ports, he came into contact with the beautiful Arline Ellis. Clanton indicated that he was romantically inclined towards Arline, but she always gave him the cold shoulder.

Arline was embroiled in deep trouble at the start of "The Purple Heart of Erlik." In Canton, she had been visiting the apartment of Baron Takayami, a Japanese diplomat. The Baron's servant, a Russian spy, murdered him and stole important Japanese documents. Fleeing the scene of the crime, Arline was observed by Duke Tremayne, a ruthless American crook. Encountering Arline in Shanghai, Tremayne used his information to blackmail Arline into acting as his accomplice in a robbery scheme.

The Takayami incident was increasing the possibility of war between China and Japan. Two countries did go to war during 1931-33 over Manchuria. It is probable, therefore, that "The Purple Heart of Erlik" took place in 1930.

Tremayne wanted Arline to purloin the Purple Heart of Erlik, a ruby belonging to Woon Yuen, a sinister Chinese merchant. Erlik, or Erlik Khan, is a monstrous Mongolian god whose cult appears in various incarnations through Robert E. Howard's works. Other manifestations of the Erlik cult was fought by Francis X. Gordon and Steve Harrison. Woon Yuen was in the nasty habit of pouring human blood on Erlik's sacred ruby.

Wild Bill Clanton became entangled in the diabolical affair because he still wanted to se-

duce Arline. His pursuit of Arline made him an enemy of both Woon Yuen and Tremayne. By the story's end, both Woon Yuen and Tremayne were dead, the ruby had not been stolen from the Erlik cult, and Clanton had gotten what he had been seeking from the tale's beginning.

In his courtship of Arline, Clanton certainly was no gentleman. When he first encountered Arline in "The Purple Heart of Erlik," he must certainly have raped her if she hadn't knocked him unconscious with a heavy pitcher. Since he saved her life at the conclusion, Arline changed her attitude towards Clanton and willingly accepted his embraces.

"The Dragon of Kao Tsu" brought Clanton to Singapore. He had been hired by Marianne Allison, a spoiled heiress, to steal the ivory statue of a dragon. Inside the statue was hidden an agreement between Marianne's father, a San Francisco tycoon known as Old Man Allison, and General Kai, a Chinese warlord. The document granted Old Man Allison an oil concession inside China. Having lost a large portion of his fortune in the stock market crash of October 1929, Allison was desperate to retrieve this agreement. He dispatched his daughter to Singapore for this purpose. The reference to the stock market crash would indicate that "The Dragon of Kao Tsu" was set in 1930.

In the end, Marianne got the document but she unsuccessfully tried to cheat Clanton out of the money which she promised him. Clanton took his revenge by stealing Marianne's virtue. Although Clanton's sexual encounter with Marianne could be viewed as a case of rape, Robert E. Howard attempted to mitigate his protagonist's action by having Marianne indicate a sense of enjoyment in her eyes.

It could be speculated that General Kai was meant to be General Chiang Kai-Shek, the then ruler of China. Speculation could also be done about the identity of Old Man Allison. The name Allison appeared in many different contexts throughout Howard's works. James Allison was the hero of a fantasy series involving reincarnation. Howard also created two versions of a character called Steve Allison, the Sonora Kid. The original Sonora Kid was con-

ceived as a gunslinger of the early 1900's who not only roamed the American West but Asia as well. This Sonora Kid appeared in a series of fragments which Howard wrote when he was a teenager. These fragments were collected into two small press booklets, NORTH KHYBER (December, 1987) and THE SONORA KID (June 1988) by Cryptic Publications (216 Fernwood Avenue, Upper Montclair, New Jersey 07403). Later when he matured into his twenties, Howard reincarnated the Sonora Kid as a western hero of the 1870's and 1880's.

Perhaps the two Sonora Kids were father and son. Could the Steve Allison of the early 1900's be Old Man Allison? Probably not because the fragments which Howard wrote in his teens indicate that his Sonora Kid was still unmarried after World War I. This Steve Allison did have an older brother named Frank who could be Old Man Allison. One of the three sisters of the Allison brothers was named Marion. Maybe Marianne Allison was name after her.

In 1930, the time of his last recorded exploit, Wild Bill Clanton was about fifty. He may have continued to haunt the bedrooms of Africa and Asia. He may have died at the hands of his enemies, or died in bed. If he died in bed, he probably was doing more than just sleeping at the time. Of course, he could have been arrested for rape and died in a prison bunk.

PROBABLE CHRONOLOGY

1880 - Birth of Wild Bill Clanton.

1903 - Clanton becomes master of the SAUCEY WENCH ("She Devil"). He engages the ship in "black-birding."

1904 - "Black-birding" is outlawed in Queensland, Australia.

1905 - Clanton briefly loses control over the SAUCEY WENCH ("Ship in Mutiny").

1914-18 - World War I rages. Clanton was probably in Libya sometime during the war.

1921 - A Berber uprising erupts in Morocco.

1922 - In Tebessa, Algeria, a plot unfolds to steal a cargo of guns which Clanton is selling to the Berbers ("Desert Blood").

1926 - The Berber rebellion is suppressed. Clanton travels to the Soviet Union.

Not even Wild Bill could stand up under a clout like that.



1927 - In Peshawur, India, Sonya Ormanoff tries to hijack an arms shipment from Clanton ("Murderer's Grog").

1930 - In Shanghai, Clanton battles the Erlik cult ("The Purple Heart of Erlik"). In Singapore, Clanton is hired to steal an ivory statue ("The Dragon of Kao Tsu").

DEATH IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Dan Turner, Hollywood Detective

by Robert Leslie Bellem

Having polished off a pastrami sandwich and washed it down with a nightcap of Vat 69, I was ankling toward my jalopy on the restaurant's rear parking lot when an undersized bozo barged at me from the midnight shadows.

"Hey, bud," he said in a confidential semi-whisper. "Got a minute?"

"What for?"

"I wanna demonstrate a little invention of mine," he lipped mysteriously. "What I call my widow-maker. Your wife, she ast me to show it to you."

I gave him the perplexed focus. "My wife? You must have your wires crossed, Shorty. I'm a confirmed bachelor."

"That'll do to tell, only I ain't buying it. Your missus ast me to slip you the widow-

maker on account of she wants to be made into a widow." He twitched his skinny right arm and a knife dropped from his sleeve into his fingers.

Brandishing it ferociously, he plunged forward and drove the sharpened point at my giblets.

I choked: "What the hell—!" and almost busted a gusset jumping sideways out of stabbing range. The slashing knife missed me by a scant inch.

I back pedaled, swerving away from that seeking steel point; tried to dig inside my coat for the .32 automatic I always carry in an armpit clip for emergencies. This was an emergency, senior grade, but I was so busy dodging and twisting that I couldn't even reach my roscoe let alone unholster it; the little guy stayed too close to me.

"Lying ain't gonna save you, chum." He jockeyed for position. "You got a wife, all right, only she's fed

up with being Mrs. Lew Larchmont. That's why she slipped me a C-note to slice you loose from your guts. Hold still so's I can earn my wages."

"Lew Larchmont? That's not my name, you sawed-off maniac. I'm Dan Turner!"

"Who in hell do you think you're kidding?" he lifted a supercilious lip. "I seen you in so



DEATH IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Dan Turner is mistaken for a movie star. But instead of being a compliment, it led to two very bloody murders.

many movies I could reccannize you with a blindfold on."

In this he was as haywire as seven dimes to the dollar. I'm a private dick here in Hollywood, not a screen hero. It was true that Larchmont and I looked slightly alike in general specifications: he was just about as tall as my own six-feet-plus and probably weighed within a few pounds of my hundred and ninety, but even on a midnight-darkened parking lot you'd have to be both nearsighted and screwy to confuse my battle-scarred mush with the hambo's Greek-god pro-

In this he was as haywire as seven dimes to the dollar.

file.

I'd known Larchmont's wife long before she married him; back in the days when she was a Central Casting extra entitled Dixie O'Neill. In my book she was a sweet kid and a square shooter, and it shocked the wadding out of me to think she'd hire a professional killer to butcher her hubby.

A stratagem struck me as I circled away from him. Over on my left there was a small black puddle of crankcase oil. I maneuvered the shabby slob slowly toward the slipper place; then I pretended to give him an opening.

He lunged forward. His right hoof skidded from under him like a halfback kicking an invisible punt; whereupon I nailed him. My first punch got his knife wrist, sent the shiv sailing through the night to land against a cream-colored Cad convertible. Then I teed off on the shrimp's dewlaps, knocked him flat.

"Now, you little creep," I said, and began slapping him. "Who really hired you for this caper?"

He bucked, squirmed. "Ow-w-w! I already told you—your wife—"

I growled stinging him across the kisser. "Dixie Larchmont wouldn't pay a crumb like you to bump her hubby."

"All right, I—oww-wooo!—I made a mistake. Lemme up!"

Footfalls pelted across the parking lot. I straightened up to see what cooked now but I was too slow. Somebody rushed up behind me, maced the back of my conk with something awful heavy.

I took a brief trip to dreamland; and when I woke up the shrimp had scrambled. Replacing him, a worried-looking guy was leaning over me: a character whose Greek-god profile, dimpled chin and sleepy-lidded bedroom peepers were familiar to every screen fan from hell to Hohokus.

He was Lew Larchmont in person.

I heard him talking to somebody nearby. "Good God, Elaine, I know this man I just slugged! He's an old friend of Dixie's; that private investigator who's always making headlines. Dan Turner."

A female voice drawled scornfully. "He was beating that little chap while he was down, the bully. Call the police and have him arrested."

Indignation lifted me to my haunches. "Oh, fine. Some creep tries to kill me and you want *me* pinched!" Glowering, I tabbed the drawl's owner as Elaine Sinclair, business manager for several of Hollywood's biggest names, including Larchmont himself.

The Larchmont hambo stared at me. "Did—did you say that little guy tried to kill you?"

"Yeah." I stood up. "And you helped him scam."

"Really, Lew," the tall dame said in bored pear-shaped tones. "We don't have to kneel and grovel our apologies, do we?"

I snarled: "You can skip the whole thing, sugar, but don't come bawling to me for sympathy when you lose your best client to an undertaker." I aimed a thumb at Larchmont. "He's got the murder sign on him."

The handsome ham's jaw dropped. "Wh-what?"

"That's why the shrimp with the shiv tried to abolish me," I said. "He mistook me for you."

"You're j-joking!" he stammered.

I was fed up with the way Larchmont had agreed with every dirty remark the Sinclair tomato dished me. I had done my best to warn him he was in danger; now he could look out for himself. The hell with him.

"Okay, Tutz, remind me to dislike you when I have nothing better to do." And to Larchmont: "Better buy yourself an armored vest, chump; you may need it."

I used my handkerchief to pick up the pieces of the busted shiv I had knocked out of the stubby ginzo's fist. Wrapping the hunks carefully to preserve possible fingerprints, I barged to my coupe, whooshed off the lot. I lamped the Larchmont hambo and his sexy blonde business manager, Elaine Sinclair, standing there as I whammed past them and hit the street in high gear. Then I went barreling along Sunset under forced draft, peeling my peepers for a public phone.

Presently I dropped anchor in front of a night owl druggery; barged indoors, wedged my heft in a booth and made with the nickel, dialed Dixie Larchmont's number.

"Hello?" a clear, girlishly pleasant voice said drowsily.

"That you, Dixie? Dan Turner this end. Listen, hon, I've got to see you right away. It's impor—"

"I'm sorry but Mrs. Larchmont isn't in," the girlish drowsy voice interrupted me. "This is her cousin, Margo O'Neill," she amplified the introduction. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

I said: "Look, Miss O'Neill, when will Dixie—"

"There was a symphony concert tonight down in Santa Monica, some composer named Frank Hubbell was going to conduct one of his new tone poems. Dixie's crazy about symphonic music."

"Yeah, I know. She went to this Santa Monica Symphony shindig, you say?"

"Dixie decided she'd go to the concert alone, what with Lew being gone out of town on location and not due back till tomorrow—"

"Hey, what the hell was that about Larchmont being away on location?" I yodeled, knowing the guy was still on deck. Wiping the surprise out of my voice, I said: "Oh, sure, that's right. I'd forgotten Lew had a new pic in production. So he won't be home tonight, eh?"

"No. But Dixie ought to be here soon. If you've got to see her, you could come wait for her and we could talk until she gets here."

I said: "I'm on my way, kitten," and mopped a fifth of sweat off my brow as I barged from the booth. Twelve minutes after that I parked on the sweeping circular driveway of the Larchmont stash.

I blipped to the massive front portal and it swung inward before I could locate the doorbell. "Hello," somebody said. "I'll bet you're Dan Turner, aren't you? Please come in. I'm Margo."

"That I surmised," I said. Then, as she switched some lights on, I glommed a gander at her. Her blue-black hair hung down her back, making her milky complexion all the whiter by contrast.

But it was her negligee that really stunned me. Of black chiffon three degrees thinner than a silkworm's breath, it frothed around her figure in diaphanous folds hinting at what it concealed and concealing extremely little. Merely looking at her made my arteries harden like pie crust in an overheated oven. "Is Dixie home yet?"

She settled herself on a long, low deeply-upholstered divan and patted the cushions alongside her. "No, not yet. Wouldn't you like to sit down while we're waiting for her?" She crossed one gam over the other, and the negligee fell away from a dimpled knee.

It was hard to me to suppress my impulses and ignore the brunette's inviting gesture. Indeed, I damned nearly surrendered to my inclination. Just as I started toward her, though, we heard a car purring up the driveway.

Margo said: "That must be Dixie now," and pouted her disappointment. The next instant she surged off the davenport. "W-What was that?"

It was a female shriek lancing the outer night, highpitched, protracted, rising to s shrilly

sustained note of hysteria. I catapulted to a nearby French window with my roscoe in my duke. "Trouble!" I rasped over my shoulder. "Stay where you are, precious," Then I careened outdoors and made with the feet.

Around behind the house there was a broad concrete parking apron fronting a wide four-car garage. The area was brightly illuminated by a mammoth studio-type flood lamp on a high pole, its glaring baleful beam directed downward so that you could see a sleek Lincoln Continental nosed toward one of the garage stalls. I focused my optics on the expensive bucket, trying to glimpse Dixie at its wheel. She wasn't there, but the screams were still sounding off with increasing intensity from somewhere close by.

She was just beyond the Lincoln's ponderous front bumper, stooping over a small crumpled figure that looked like a shapeless bag of rags nobody wanted any more.

He was the stubby little slob who'd assaulted me on the cafe parking lot a while back, and he was sprawled in a widening puddle of his own gravy. Some dirty soanso had stabbed him twice in the stomach and once in the chest, and he was beyond vulcanizing.

"He's dead!" she caterwauled. "He's dead—he's dead—oh, my God—a dead man—a c-corpse—right in front of my garage—and I almost ran over him—oh-h-h—"

I harvested a generous fistful of her glossy red tresses and yanked her head back, slapped her hands down from her mush. "For God's sake, Dixie, shut up, will you?"

But she still moaned: "A dead man—I got out of the car to turn on the spotlight—oh-h-h, God, I stumbled over him when I went to open the doors of the garage—"

I said grimly: "Don't lay it on too thick, sugar. You've made your point. Quit belaboring it. Remember what Shakespeare said about protesting too much? Now simmer down."

"Wh-wha-what—?" She shivered like a kitten coughing oyster-shells; then, abruptly, her shudders subsided and she stared at me. "Dan!" she mumbled around my hand in her yap.

"Yeah, hon, it's me—Dan. But the dead man, who is he?"

Her peepers widened, then narrowed. "Who is he? Why, I — I — I don't know. I never saw him before."

I said: "Listen, Dixie, in a couple of minutes we're going to have to call the cops. If you're lying they have ways of breaking you down; ugly ways. I'm more gentle because I'm your friend. I'll ask you once more, kiddo. Do you know who this little guy is? Have you ever met him before, had any business dealings with him?"

"No. N-no, certainly not." She made a bewildered gesture. "I don't even know what you're talking about. Business dealings—"

"Such as hiring him," I cut in.

"Hiring him? For wh-what?"

"Say a practical joke, for instance. On me. Or on your hubby. I'm trying to make it easy for you, hon."

She frowned, stared at me in what seemed unfeigned puzzlement. "I never play practical jokes, Dan. On you, or Lew, or anyone. You know me better than that."

"And you insist this little guy is a stranger to you?"

"Yes. I told you I never saw him before." Either she was leveling with me or she was a better actress now than she'd ever been when she was a Central Casting extra, back in the days before she married Larchmont.

"All right," I said. "Scram inside and put through a squeal to homicide headquarters. Ask for my friend Dave Donaldson if he's on duty. Get him out here in a hurry with a tech squad and a meat wagon." She started toward the stash.

When she was gone from view I stopped down, gave the stubby ginzo's remainders a closer gander. Then I stiffened, felt the short hairs prickling at the nape of my neck. He was looking straight up at me and his lips were fluttering almost imperceptibly. A little bubble formed on them, shiny red in the glare of the over head spot-light; then it burst on an exhaled sigh. His eyelids twitched and closed and opened again.

"Kee-ripes!" I strangled. "I thought you were defunct! Now listen. Lie perfectly still while I go get some whiskey. You've lost a hell of a lot of gore, and—"

"Nix...gumshoe." His voice was a thin thread of sound. "Whiskey...won't do me...no good...Don't leave me, shamus... stick... around..." Another bubble formed, popped, vanished. "I ain't...got...much time left."

I said: "Lay off the talking. Save your strength."

"Ain't...nothing left...to hold...onto." His whisper was thinner now, barley audible. I shoved my face down close to his, strained my ears to hear what he was saying. "...knowed you...was Turner...alla time...knowed you...wasn't Larchmont...when I pulled...my caper ...onna ...parking lot..."

"Never mind that part. Just tell me who butchered you. Who was it?" I dug my fingers into his arm. "Who did it?"

He closed his glims, opened them. I couldn't tell whether or not he'd understood my question. He whispered: "...supposed to be a ...gag...a rib...big joke on...you. A hunnert ...bucks...to play...a joke on...a dick..."

Another red bubble formed and broke at the corner of his kisser. "...supposed to...butt in and ...bust it up before...it went too far..." There was even less pulse in his throat now; his whisper was so akin to silence that I was doing more lip-reading than listening.

He gasped: "...supposed to...run...between us...and gimme a chance...for a fast...getaway."

"Who?" I said desperately. "Who?"

"...crossed me...up...lemme take a...beating."

"His bruised puss had the wraith of a grimace on it. "You...trounced hell outa me...before I...got out from...under...I figgered...worth more ...than a lousy century...to get...punched inna...teeth...wasn't in the...bargain...so I ast for ...more dough..."

"And got your clockworks cut open," I said. "Who did it?"

"Wasn't...expecting nothing...like that ...from...arrg-gh-h." Suddenly there were no more red bubbles, no more words. The eyes went glazed and the pulse in his throat faded

out. This time the shrimp was really deceased. And he'd kicked off without telling me who had killed him.

I straightened up, brooded a minute; set fire to a gasper. A theory was commencing to fester in my grey matter, a possible answer to the riddle.

Mainly it centered on Dixie Larchmont, married to a handsome and egotistic hambo with a widespread reputation for wolfery; Dixie, who genuinely loved this playboy husband of hers. Suppose she decided to throw a scare into him, figuring it might fetch him back on the straight and narrow path to his own fireside?

Maybe she hoped I would go to Larchmont and say to him: "Look, buster, a guy tried to murder me, thinking I was you. He claimed

I straightened up, brooding a minute, set fire to a gasper.

your wife paid him to knock you off. Better watch your step, pal, or next time you might find yourself wearing a mahogany overcoat."

Moodily I barged back to the French window into the massive, sunken music conservatory; stepped across the low sill. Dixie and her brunette cousin were standing over by the grand piano, giving me the frightened focus as I came in. I looked gloomily at Dixie. "You phoned the cops?"

"Y-yes." She had a fragment of lace handkerchief in her hands, twisting it, tearing it. "Dan—that man out there—was he really dead?"

"He is now."

"Now? What do you mean?"

I shrugged. "There was still a little spark left when I sent you in here to call the law. It flickered out in the middle of his last line of dialogue." Sirens sounded away yonder, coming nearer and louder at a hell of a clip. "That'll be the bulls, baby. This isn't going to pleasant."

Dave Donaldson arrived with a trampling herd of his homicide henchmen. Everybody started asking questions and two white-jacketed ambulance orderlies loaded the slain shrimp's remnants onto a stretcher and toted him indoors for closer inspection. It was at this point that Lew Larchmont unexpectedly hypered into the tepee.

Dixie spotted him first. "Lew! I thought you were out on location!"

"Bad weather. Shooting schedule postponed. Got back in town late. What goes on here?" Then he lamped the defunct guy, turned and pinned the blazing focus on me. "So you caught up with him and killed him!" he rasped nastily. "But why did you have to do it in my home?"

Unluckily for me, Donaldson overheard the remark; whereupon I found myself behind a big black eightball.

"Did I hear you say Turner bumped the little guy?" he demanded in a voice that rattled the rafters.

"Well, er, not exactly," the hambo hedged. "I *do* know I saw Turner and the dead man fighting about an hour ago in a restaurant parking lot."

I yeepped: "Yeah, because the creep came at me with a shiv! What would you expect me to do, kiss him?" I made a bitter mouth. "I was just going to give him his lumps and have him tossed in the bastille; but then you came along, knocked me cockeyed, gave him a chance to take a powder. The runt said he'd been hired to bump *you*. He also claimed it was your own wife that hired him."

He flinched as if I had whapped him across the kisser with a wet herring. "You stinking liar!" Then, savagely: "Now I get the pitch. You used to be sweet on Dixie—"

"Don't be absurd. We were just friends, is all."

"You were in love with her," he ignored the interruption. "I beat you time. That made you sore, and so this is your filthy jealous revenge; trying to break up our marriage by saying she paid somebody to murder me. The real truth is, the little guy was your stooge; and when your

scheme didn't work, you killed him and planted him on my property!"

I said: "Let's theorize. Suppose you'd like to ditch Dixie but she's so clean she never gives you any grounds you could use in a divorce action. She won't even look at any other man, so there's no chance of compromising her. She made sure you'd have nothing on her."

"Nonsense!"

"So assume you dream up a complicated plan. You hire a ginzo to pull a phony attack on me with a phony knife. He puts great emphasis on calling me Larchmont. You also coach him to state that Dixie is the one who's paying him for this cutlery caper. He overstresses this, not once but several times, to make sure it registers on me."

"Hogwash!"

"Then you step in and separate us; clout me cold let him lam. You're gambling on the obvious hope that when I regain my senses I'll warn you Dixie is trying to get you knocked off. You figure you can use my testimony to win a divorce from her."

"Sheepdip!"

I said: "But your scheme goes haywire when I fail to name Dixie as instigator of the attack. My suspicions were based on three things. First, the little bozo missed me several times when he could have stabbed me. Second, he overacted when he put so much insistence on Dixie wanting to be a widow. And third, when I knocked the shiv out of his mitt it bounced against a Caddy and the blade busted like pot metal. In fact, it was a prop-knife made of some soft alloy ground down and polished to look like steel."

"So what?"

"So the rib backfired in his face when I belabored him with lumps. This make him sore. Therefore he puts the bite on you; tries to shake you down for an extra payoff. You suddenly realize he can wreck your divorce plans. The publicity could give your screen career a nasty black eye."

"Poppycock!"

"So you give him the permanent hush with a genuine shiv. You pretend to pin the rap on

me, figuring I'll try to clear myself by shifting it onto Dixie; whereupon you'll be rid of her. Neat, hunh? Especially when most it is feed-box information straight from the horse's mouth. The horse being the shabby ginzo, who did a little talking before he kicked off."

"Lies! A pack of lousy lies! You stinking skunk, I'm going to beat your brains out!" He swung on me.

"No," Donaldson said, fending him off. "Let me." And he pushed me against the wall, leaned his weight on me. "All right, Sherlock, it's time to come clean. Either you killed the midge or you didn't. What's your answer?"

"I didn't."

He grabbed me by the ears. "Wrong answer, Philo. You ought to know: wrong answers always make me sore as hell." He began banging my conk against the woodwork, *boom-thump-wham*. "I go around hurting people." *Slam-thwack-bop*. "Gives the police department a bad name." *Thud-whack-boom*. "Now you wouldn't want the police department to have a bad name, would you, Hawkshaw?" he asked piously.

That was when the room commenced swimming around me in elliptic circles. Donaldson stepped back, grinning, and let me fall on my trumpet. As I went down I caught a last foggy slant at his apoplectic puss, the smirking smile worn by Lew Larchmont. I gandered the shocked expression in Dixie Larchmont's widened blue peepers; lamped the dismay and revulsion that registered on her cousin Margo's pallid pan. Then I slugged the carpet with my smeller, less than two feet away from the staring glassy eyes of the guy I was accused of bumping. "Damn you, Shorty, this is all your fault," I muttered under my breath, and passed out.

I don't know how much later it was that I heard myself mumble: "The hell with Hollywood. From now on somebody else can have it." The sound of my own voice snapped me wide awake, pried my peepers open. I discovered the murdered runt was no longer on his stretcher alongside me. The two white-coated morgue orderlies were now trundling his lifeless husk

out to the waiting meat wagon. Over across the room, Donaldson and his cohorts were clustered around Lew Larchmont and his redhaired frau, engaged in loud and heated dispute.

Despite the distance I could catch most of the dialogue. Larchmont was giving out with: "Damn it, the flatfoot's obviously guilty. Why don't you take him to jail before he come to and makes trouble?"

"I intend to. But you're going downtown too."

"Who, me?" Larchmont yeped. "What for? Even if you need me as a material witness you don't have to have me at headquarters—not this late at night. I'm not going to sneak away."

"I'll admit you made out a pretty strong case against Turner, but on the other hand he made out just as good a case against you. I'm a great believer in percentages. Pinch enough suspects and the right one may be among the batch."

"Listen, I'm not going to stand still for—"

"Which remind me," Dave said calmly, "I think I'll ask your wife to come along, too. From what Turner said, she's not entirely in the clear."

Both Larchmont and Dixie flipped their lids, stated yowling like banshees. Simultaneously a gentle hand nudged me. I turned my throbbing noggin and beheld the luscious Margo O'Neill, leaning over me. I said: "Hi, sugar."

"Oh-h-h, Mr. Turner...!" she whispered: "Thank goodness you...you're all right. I was scared that big police lieutenant k-killed you!"

I said: "Something tells me this is going to be the last time I'll let him get away with it. Hey, what the hell—?"

I added as a sudden uproar erupted over on the far side of the room.

Staring, I lamped the clump of coppers flying apart like buttons off a fat man's vest. Lew Larchmont's knuckles took Donaldson on the dimple, dumped him on his duff. The hambo lashed out again, felled two more headquarters heroes, lowered his head and butted another dick in the elly-bay. The dick folded faster than a diver with the bends. Dixie screamed: "Darling, don't!" but Larchmont disregarded her, made a dash for the door.

The three remaining gendarmes catapulted after him from assorted directions. Inevitably their paths converged and they came crashing together just six inches short of the scrambling ham. He gained the portal, vanished as his trio

I didn't walk, I ran like hell.

of pursuers fell sprawling in a squirming tangle of arms and legs.

There was an open window near me and the opportunity was too tempting to pass up. I leaped to me pins, gave the brunette Margo a swift kiss good-bye and powdered over the sill, full steam ahead. I had places to go, things to do and a blonde to confront. "Tally-ho and yoicks," I grunted sourly. "Dan Turner rides again!"

I didn't walk, I ran like hell. Larchmont had spoken of Elaine Sinclair as his next door neighbor. I knew the blonde dame couldn't possibly live to the north unless she resided in a gopher hole, because northward from Larchmont's boundaries there was only undeveloped terrain slanting up toward the foothills. Therefore I faced south, filled me bellows with oxygen and made like a jackrabbit. Behind me was the sound of galloping brogans and baying voices.

I kept sprinting, and presently the Sinclair tomato's house loomed, a rambling Spanish-rancho stash deceptively unpretentious until you realized it covered an area the size of the Pasadena Rose Bowl. Around in the rear there was a swimming pool, several private dressing cabanas and concealed indirect fluorescent lights under the water, giving you the effect of moon-glow below the limpid blue lagoon. In this dim, watery effulgence I saw a body floating; a beautiful feminine body.

For a single split second I thought it was a corpse; then it stirred long, shapely arms and legs, lazily for propulsion, and drifted toward the near edge of the pool. The nymph in the water

was of course, Elaine Sinclair. Even with her burnished golden tresses concealed by a rubber cap there was no mistaking her tallness, her sinuous sexiness, the exotic appeal of her cameo features.

I gumshoed to the pool's edge, waited for her to drift close enough for me to grab her and haul her out of the drink. The notion occurred to me that Lew Larchmont might not have lit a shuck for the foothills, after all; that maybe the cops had bayed off on a false scent. If so, the hambo would logically seek sanctuary here with his blonde business manager; it was the nearest available hideaway and the Sinclair cupcake would hardly happened also to be her sweetie, which I strongly suspected.

I waited until the blonde quail floated to the tiled rim of the pool; watched as she flopped over and rested her hands on the guard rail. Then I grabbed her wrists, yanked her out of the water; lifted her by main strength and wrapped my arms around her like a grizzly hugging its prey.

She gave vent to a startled outcry that switched to an exhalation of pain as I tightened down on her lithe form, squeezed the air out of her. Then, dripping wet and sinuously slippery, she began struggling to pry herself out of my embrace. This got her nowhere; I merely crushed her all the closer. This part of my profession I liked; it was nice work if you could get it.

I wrestled her around so I could keep a glim on the cabanas, just in case Lew Larchmont came barreling forth to rescue his distressed damsel. Meanwhile the Sinclair frail's glimmers opened wide with astonishment as she recognized me. "You—!" she gasped.

"In person."

"So you're a — a Peeping Tom as well as a — bully! Let me g-go!"

Exerting a little extra effort, I lowered my map toward hers. She tried to turn aside, tried to avoid my kisser. She failed. I clamped my mouth on her lips and kept them there. If Larchmont happened to be within viewing distance this ought to fetch him, I figured.

It didn't. But it fetched Elaine Sinclair. Her arms snaked about my neck and she clung to me with abrupt, unexpected ardor; welded herself against me and parted her lips for another kiss.

This wasn't according to plan. Somewhere my schemes had slipped a cog.

"Well for cripes' sake!" I exclaimed, remembering how I had speculated on how much hauteur you might beat out of her with a buggy whip. She wasn't haughty now, she was vital and vibrant and feverish in splendid surrender; a surrender that demanded as much as it gave.

I peeled her off my poundage, held her at arm's length, saw the invitation in her glimmers. I said: "Hon, we'll hate ourselves for this."

"So what!" she whispered. "It's only..."

From somewhere behind me a roscoe's spiteful accents sneezed: *Ka-Chow!* and sliced her conversation across the middle, chopped it off forever.

A sensation halfway between the sting of a hornet and the impact of sledgehammer took me along the side of the skull, just above me left ear. It scorched a blistering furrow through my dandruff—and bored a neat, raw red tunnel in the blonde tomatoe's forehead, smack-dab between the eyes.

She sagged in my arms, slipped away from he like a wraith in a dream. She crumpled at my feet in a lifeless sprawl, dead before she fell.

I dropped across her corpse, paralyzed and blinded. I went toppling down that old familiar long black shaft whose bottomless depths swirled around oblivion. The last thing I felt was a hand picking my pocket; then I felt nothing at all. I blacked out.

It was Donaldson who found me, though I didn't know anything till I came to with a bandage on my conk and found myself back in the Larchmont stash with Dave dribbling Scotch down my gullet.

"Come on, Hawkshaw, wake up," he kept growling worriedly. "I can't stay here all night fussing with you. You're okay. The sawbones said you'd survive. You got a cast-iron skull."

He funneled another jorum of highland tonic into me. "Don't be stubborn, Sherlock, I've got prisoners to take downtown. Wake up dammit!"

I coughed on the whiskey, felt it spreading through me nooks and crannies, gradually bringing me to full awareness of my surroundings. Over beyond Donaldson I lamped the Larchmont ham, his clothes mussed and dusty from his recent flight to the foothills and his handsome pan showing signs of contact with the hard fists of the law. He was standing very close to his dainty redhaired wife, and they were both hemmed in by unsympathetic coppers.

"So you caught him," I mumbled.

"Yeah, you're damned right we caught him. He tricked us at first; circled around and headed for the Sinclair dame's layout. We got wise, though. We made with the short cut and trapped him." He scowled. "Heard a shot just as we were putting the arm on him, so I went on down to investigate—and there you were with the head blonde."

"Too bad you couldn't have reached the swimming pool half an instant sooner," I said bitterly. "You might have collared Elaine Sinclair's killer. Or are you figuring to hang that rap on me?" I added.

For once, Dave refused to be quarrelsome. "You? Don't be silly, shamus. Your rod hadn't been fired. Besides, somebody creased your skull with a slug; I didn't figure you shot yourself. Also, we had the guilty party by that time."

"The hell you utter!" I said, and lurched to an unsteady perpendicular stance, with the luscious young brunette Margo O'Neill lending me swift solicitous assistance.

Donaldson grinned soothingly. "I've got news for you. Larchmont's wife is the killer. We caught her on the way back from the Sinclair grounds. Like you said, she'd hired the shabby little guy to put a scare in Larchmont so he would quit catting around with his business manager. It backfired, and when the runt tried to blackmail her she bumped him. That loused up the works, so she trucked on down and blasted the dame who'd made all the trouble in the first place. It's open and shut."

"It's also haywire," I said. "I'll concede that the stubby bozo was paid to attack me with a phony shiv and to name Dixie Larchmont as the party who hired him. I was supposed to pass this information on to Larchmont so he'd use it for divorce evidence. But it wasn't Dixie who craved her marriage wrecked. It wasn't Larchmont, either. It was a cookie who was infatuated with him; who hoped to bust up his home, catch him on the rebound."

Dave said: "Elaine Sinclair? So what? Mrs. Larchmont shot her."

"Wrong. Elaine's death was happenstance. Oh sure, it got her out of contention for Larchmont's affections; but the murder slug was mainly meant for me. You see, I'd mentioned having the shabby shrimp's shattered shiv in my pocket. I haven't got it now, though. When that death bullet creased me unconscious somebody frisked me for it. And possession spells guilt." Margo O'Neill made a sudden break for the window and I rasped: "No you don't, pet!"

She screamed as I felled her with a flying tackle. Squirming, clawing, squalling, she tried to fight me off as I flattened her to the floor, reached inside the diaphanous negligee and snatched out the broken blade, still wrapped in my handkerchief. "This gets you sprayed with cyanide disinfectant, precious."

"It's a studio prop. The only possible reason it could be important to you is that some property man on one of the lots gave it to you as a souvenir. In turn, you gave it to the shrimp to pull a phoney attack on me. You were afraid I'd trace it back to the studio it came from, so you had to get it back even though it meant another croaking."

Panic slithered in her glims.

I said: "You're the doll who was infatuated with Larchmont— your own cousin's hubby. You hired the stubby ginzo and later killed him. You hoped to frame Dixie for the murder. And with Elaine Sinclair out of the way, you figured you'd have a clear track to the heart of your favorite ham." I yanked her to her feet and shoved her at Donaldson. "Hang the hardware on her, Dave, she's all yours."

I squinted over toward the redhaired Dixie Larchmont and her handsome hubby. They were nipped wrist to wrist.

"And Dave," I added. "Take the bracelets off these people."

Dixie said softly: "There's no hurry. We want to be near each other, don't we, Lew?"

"Always and forever," he murmured. Then: "Turner, I-I'd like to express my appreciation for-for—"

"Just mail me a check," I said.

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COVER QUEST

I've given you a hint on this one. What I'm looking for with this cover is the magazine title, story title, and date the magazine was published.

Thanks to all those who participated in last issue's contest. Sorry, but there can only be one

winner, so it is best to get your guesses in as fast as possible. Send your choice to:

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I'VE SEEN THAT BEFORE

This issue we have what one could easily call a total rip-off. Our first cover is by the king of pulp artists, Walter Baumhofer, as published in *ADVENTURE*, May 1936. As one can easily see our protagonist is reaching for his gun from within his —London Fog— raincoat. One can just imagine that our hero is has finally caught up with his prey, or perhaps it is the other way around, and he is about to put the kibosh on him. Walter's painting shows detail, texture and the proper use of light and shadow.

On the other hand...*SHORT STORIES*, February 25, 1938 has a cover painted by Rudolph W. Zirm, that has very little detail, very little texture and damn little imagination. Our hero has been altered into a western character. His gun has changed from a .45 automatic to a six-shooter and for some reason he is pulling the

gun from a holster that has been carelessly slung around his shoulder. Questions raised about this painting is what is he leaning up against? Is it a wall? Is the wall the light area or the dark? Why is there a cactus in the lower portion of the painting? Did Rudolph think that we wouldn't understand it to be a western scene?

Either way, it is a perfect example of an artist who is stuck for an idea and shamelessly stealing from a previous work.

Thanks go to Dan Gobbett for bringing this to my attention. He bought the pulp in New York City and brought it over to me at my table and said..."Hey, I've Seen That Before!"

RARE PULP

Our rare pulp for this issue is not one of any great value. But it does fit the term, "Rare" since most every issue of a "Red Star" whatever is very hard to come by. From what I can find there are, *RED STAR MYSTERY*, *RED STAR ADVENTURES*, *RED STAR LOVE REVELATIONS*, *RED STAR DETECTIVE*, and *RED STAR WESTERN*. If you search pulp lists, you'll find that this magazine is fairly expensive, but it isn't the price that I'm concerned with but the rarity.

This issue was published in September, 1940 and the cover artist is unlisted. If I had to hazard to make a guess, I'll choose Paul Stahr as the artist. Mr. Stahr was a house favorite over at Munsey with many covers to his credit for

ARGOSY and the like. As one can plainly see, the cover illustrates the lead character, the Silver Buck in "Valley of the Vanquished" by James P. Olsen. The Silver Buck, if memory serves me correctly, never made it out of *RED STAR WESTERN*, similar to Don Diavolo in *RED STAR MYSTERY*. (This is not quite true with Don Diavolo as a story was printed in an obscure digest magazine, *Yogi Mysteries*, years later.)

HENRY HERBERT HOBBS... THE .45 POCKET PIECE

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